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INCLUDING

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PREACHED IN THE CITY-ROAD CHAPEL, LONDON,

ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1833;

AN

ENLARGED ACCOUNT OF HIS CHARACTER AND DEATH;

AND

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

BY JABEZ BUNTING.

"PRAIS'D, WEPT, AND HONOURED BY *the friends* HE LOV'D!"

"HEU! QUANTÒ MINUS EST CUM RELIQUIS VERSARI, QUAM TUI MEMINISSE."

LONDON:

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T. KAYE, PRINTER, CASTLE-STREET, LIVERPOOL.

To JAMES WOOD, Esq., of Grove-House, Manchester.

My dear Friend,

The last act of the distinguished man whose death has occasioned the following pages, in the last interview with him which I had the privilege of enjoying, was to place in my hands a letter addressed to you. And the last sentence I ever heard him utter was in reference to the subject of that letter, and expressed the pleasure which he anticipated in becoming once more your visitor and inmate, should he be spared to attend the next Wesleyan Conference in Manchester.

This incident, though chiefly interesting to myself alone, has suggested the thought, that I might not improperly use it as an apology for respectfully *inscribing to you* this humble memorial of departed worth and genius. I gladly take the opportunity of testifying the high value which I place upon your long-tried and faithful friendship, and the affectionate esteem with which, during an uninterrupted intimacy of nearly forty years, I have never ceased to regard your general character, and your christian virtues.

The circle of our earthly friendships is rapidly contracting, by the continual removal to "a better country, that is, an heavenly," of those who were once its lights and ornaments, and with whom we have profitably and delightfully held communion. The loss of so many, who are gone home to GOD, cannot but make us feel that our surviving friends, and especially those who were loved in early life, are now additionally dear and valuable. May it also have the effect of stimulating us to increasing piety and devotedness in the work and cause of CHRIST; so that, when we too shall be withdrawn from all the cares and all the pleasures of this lower world, we may, through his infinite mercy and merits, be found ready for the society of the Blessed, and for the everlasting vision and fruition of GOD!

Excuse the liberty which I have taken with your name, in venturing thus to prefix it to the present publication; and believe me to be always, with the greatest respect and love, and with the best wishes for you, and for all that are yours,

Your obliged and faithful friend,

JABEZ BUNTING.

Liverpool, April 10, 1833.

A SERMON, &c.

"VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, IF A MAN KEEP MY SAYING, HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH."—*John* viii, 51.

I MAY perhaps be allowed to state to you, my Christian friends, with all sincerity, that, in reference to the solemn service assigned to me this morning, I shall greatly need your prayers, and your utmost candour and indulgence. The letters which at once summoned me to this duty, and announced the mournful event which has called for it, overtook me in the course of a long journey, in a very distant part of the kingdom; from which, without returning home, I have hastened by the nearest route to this metropolis, that I might follow to their last earthly abode the mortal remains of my dear and honoured friend. That special and deliberate preparation which ought, under other circumstances, to have preceded an engagement like the present, has been, in my case, quite impracticable. The request, however, of MR. WATSON'S family, and of the Wesleyan Missionary Sub-Committee, connected with what my own heart told me were the imperative claims of an old and cherished friendship, has prevailed against all feelings of reluctance, whether arising from the sense of my utter inadequacy to do justice at any time to the subject and the occasion, or from the peculiar disadvantages under which I now appear before you.

May Almighty God help my infirmities, supply my deficiencies, and compensate my failures by his especial blessing! May the Holy Spirit excite in me and in you those sentiments which are indispensable to the due improvement of a solemnity like this;—sentiments of humiliation, and seriousness, and dependence; of prayerful anxiety for our own eternal interests; and of deep concern to be found, when *our* change shall come, in peace, without spot, and blameless!

It is one of the highest excellencies of the Christian Revelation, that it brings "life and immortality to light." And it is the peculiar and crowning glory of JESUS, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, that while he finishes the transgression, makes an end of sin and reconciliation for iniquity, and brings in everlasting righteousness, he also abolishes death, through death destroys, or *deposes*, him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and thus delivers them who must otherwise have been all their lifetime subject to bondage.

This joyous truth, so often asserted by the apostles of our Lord, is in the text emphatically announced and inculcated by himself:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." A doctrine so full of comfort to dying creatures in a dying world, deserves at all times our best attention; and I trust that it will not be found wholly unsuitable to the particular purpose for which we are now assembled, if we consider, FIRST, THE CHARACTER DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT,—THAT OF A MAN WHO "KEEPS THE SAYING OF CHRIST;" and, SECONDLY, THE PRIVILEGE ATTACHED TO THIS CHARACTER,—"HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH."

I. The CHARACTER described is that of a man who "keeps the saying of Christ."

The *saying*, or word, *of Christ* is a general phrase, which comprehends the whole of that system of religious truth, which Christ has, directly or indirectly, made known by revelation to mankind. It includes, in the first place,—

All those doctrines and precepts which were publicly taught by Christ himself, during his residence in our world. For "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Among other offices which our blessed Saviour assumed, and other characters which he sustained, one was that of a prophet,—a public teacher of religion, divinely commissioned and inspired. He proclaimed himself to be the apostle or ambassador of JEHOVAH, the messenger of the covenant of peace; and "the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, anointing him to preach the Gospel to the poor,—to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind,—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." We find, accordingly, that the four evangelists, his historians, have given us an account, not only of his personal travels, transactions, and sufferings, but of his public teachings; and it is impossible to peruse those summaries of his most remarkable discourses, and those details of his most striking and useful sayings, with which we are thus favoured, without wondering, like some of old, at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. How kind and affectionate, yet bold and faithful, was the spirit of his instructions; how simple and intelligible were his style and language; how weighty and important was his matter; and how clear and comprehensive the revelation which he made of things most necessary for man to know! "Never man spake like this man."

But the "saying" of Christ must be understood as comprehending, likewise,—

All those doctrines and precepts which were privately delivered by him to his apostles, or with which they were made acquainted, after his departure from our world, by the plenary inspiration of his Holy Spirit; and which they, in his name and by his appointment, officially communicated to mankind, and left on record for the benefit of the Church in succeeding ages. For the "great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed unto us

by them that heard him;" and not merely confirmed, but, also, further illustrated, and more minutely developed and unfolded. It was necessary to the full accomplishment of the design of our Saviour's incarnation, that he should maintain, in the general course of his personal and public ministry, a prudential reserve, with respect to some important points of religious doctrine. If, for instance, he had, explicitly and at once, wherever he went, avowed his own divine character and supreme dignity, accompanying that avowal by unequivocal displays of his infinite power and glory, in their full compass and extent; it is not easy to conceive how those ancient prophecies could ever have been fulfilled, which described the Messiah as "despised and rejected of men,—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and which foretold his sufferings and death. His atoning sacrifice, that essential part of his mediatorial task and purpose, must, humanly speaking, have been prevented by a premature disclosure of his heavenly rank, or by a too luminous and overwhelming manifestation of his divine perfections, while yet the minds of his disciples themselves were in a great measure "carnal," and ill-prepared for the entire splendour of such discoveries. He did not therefore, to use his own expression, "put new wine into old bottles." He judged it best to introduce the full blaze of that light, which he intended ultimately to impart, not suddenly, but by degrees. The darkness began to be dispersed under the preaching of John the Baptist:—this was the twilight which preceded the dawn of the evangelical day. By the personal ministry of Jesus, a still greater degree of light was poured on the moral world; and that light continued to shine with increasing lustre, till it brightened into the perfect day, in consequence of the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the assembled apostles, which completed their qualification for the great work to which they were called, as inspired instructers of mankind. Then they received the promised Spirit, who was to "guide them into all truth," to render them "wise master-builders" of the Church, and to make them perfectly

acquainted with everything which they were called as Christians to believe, experience, and practice, or as Apostles to teach, establish, and enjoin. These objects, doubtless, our Saviour had materially promoted, by his previous communications with them, especially during that invaluable season of free and confidential intercourse with him which they were permitted to enjoy, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension. For he was "seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," (the doctrines, duties, discipline, and institutions of the Christian dispensation,) "being assembled together with them," and directing his attention very principally, it would seem, to the one end of preparing them for their official labours and functions. It was probably at the close of this memorable period of divine tuition, that he gave them their great commission, "Go ye, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Now, when with this commission, and with these solemn and careful instructions as to the mode of executing it, we connect the fact of their extraordinary baptism with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as before recited, can we for a moment hesitate to admit that the inspired sayings and directions of Christ's apostles, whether doctrinal, preceptive, or disciplinary, are virtually, and in point of authority and obligation, *the saying of Christ* himself? The book called "Acts of the Apostles," and the various apostolical "Epistles," contain the record of these sayings and directions; and have claims on our veneration and implicit obedience, equal to those which are advanced by the Four Gospels themselves. It may be said,—I know that it has been said, by those who would supersede apostolical authority in the Church, under the pretence of exalting the authority of the Divine Prophet himself,—that St. Paul was not present at those apostolical assemblies which have been mentioned, and that he did not partake of the Holy

Spirit's Pentecostal effusion. This is true; but let it be remembered that the want of these advantages was abundantly supplied to him, and he was amply and equally qualified for every apostolic function, by the extraordinary revelations with which he was subsequently favoured, and of which he gave miraculous attestations to the church. "The signs of an apostle" were with him and upon him; and he, like the other apostles was authorized to say, (as he does in his Epistles to the Thessalonians and to the Corinthians,) "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath given unto us his Holy Spirit. We (that is, we apostles,) have the mind of Christ. The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

I may now add, that, in a large and general sense,—

The whole canon of Holy Scripture may be considered as included in this phrase. That all the doctrines and precepts of the *New* Testament possess indubitable claims to be regarded as Christ's own "saying," has been already evinced. And we know that the Scriptures of the *Old* Testament were written under the teaching and direction of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Christ, and that they are "able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." St. Paul speaks of "all Scripture," meaning primarily the Jewish Canon, which only was extant at the period to which he refers, as "given by inspiration of God." St. Peter, describes a large and important portion of the Old Testament, when he says "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And our blessed Saviour did, in fact, adopt and acknowledge, as his own "saying," every doctrine revealed in the Old Testament, and every *moral* precept there enjoined, (that is, in fact, every precept which was not essen-

tially, and from its very nature, of merely typical and temporary character, or of only local and limited obligation,—every general precept which has not been either directly or virtually repealed by the Gospel,) when he solemnly commanded his disciples to "search the Scriptures"; and when, in various instances, he exemplified and sanctioned the practice of referring to the books of the Old Testament, both for the establishment of divine truth, and for the direction of human conduct.

Thus it appears, that *the whole system of revealed truth* is justly entitled to the high and honourable designation of "the saying" or word "of Christ."

But what is that *keeping* of his saying which our Divine Master describes as characteristic of his true disciples? It implies,

1. *The knowledge and belief of revealed truth in the understanding.* We cannot keep what we do not know; nor can the doctrines or the laws of Christ be expected to exert any practical influence on a man's heart or life, unless his judgment shall have previously discerned their nature and import, and been convinced of their truth and obligation. Whoever, therefore, will keep the saying of Christ, must begin by a diligent investigation of those sacred oracles, which contain the records of his mind and will. The Holy Scriptures must be the subjects of his careful study. To these he must have continual recourse "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." He must thankfully improve every opportunity, which the Providence of God may place within his reach, of becoming accurately acquainted with their true meaning; and must refuse no help, public or private, which may enable him to "grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Above all, he must implore by earnest prayer the enlightening agency of the Holy Spirit. "Consider what I say," was the advice of PAUL to TIMOTHY; "and," he immediately adds, "the Lord give thee understanding in all things:"—thus teaching, that without divine illumination, as well as human diligence,

little progress can be made in the science of salvation. The understanding must be supernaturally "opened," and rescued from the bias of worldly prejudices and passions, before it can duly "understand the Scriptures," acquire just and impressive views of spiritual things, apprehend sacred verities in their proper order and proportion, their beauty, harmony, and glory, or perceive their matchless dignity and importance as "the true sayings of God." If any man lack this heavenly wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him. Then, in God's light shall he see light.

2. To keep the saying of Christ implies *the careful and conscientious retention of it in the memory.* It is not sufficient to have devoted some one particular period of our lives to the investigation of our Chistian privileges and obligations, or to have been once taught of God what we ought to be and to do. The habitual recollection of the lessons thus received is often enjoined in the Scriptures, as a duty in which we should exercise ourselves unto godliness. "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," as water wastes away out of a leaky vessel. "Ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you." In the first and third chapters of St. Peter's Second Epistle, that Apostle speaks in strong terms on the importance of this duty; and assigns it as a reason of his writing that he was anxious to assist the churches, into whose hands his letter might come, in its due and regular performance. "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

The duty of retaining "the things revealed" being thus

proved, how may that duty be successfully accomplished? Chiefly, I think, by two methods:—*First*, by the continued use of those means from which we have derived our present information; by an habitual recurrence to those fountains of light, from which alone the streams of heavenly influence and illumination flow; by a constant and persevering attention, "in season and out of season," at every fitting opportunity, to "the word of God and prayer;" including not only the private perusal of that word, but also its stated public ministrations, which even men who really have in some sense "more understanding than their teachers" always need, and, if truly wise and humble, will always be the first to value, as an ordinance designed and calculated "to stir them up, by putting them in remembrance:"—and, *Secondly*, by abounding in the exercise of holy meditation. When the shepherds "made known abroad the saying which was told them" by the angel concerning the birth of our Saviour, we are first informed by the evangelist that "all they that heard it *wondered*,"—a very profitless emotion, truly, if they rested in this merely transient feeling; and it is but too possible that *admiring* but unfruitful hearers of the gospel, as well as its profane despisers, should, after all, both "wonder and perish." There was one, however, who heard to better and holier purpose, and who derived abiding benefit and consolation from the celestial message. For the historian adds, to his statement that "all wondered," these instructive words,—"But MARY *kept* these things, and *pondered them in her heart*." The way to keep divine sayings is to ponder them in our hearts, to familiarize them to our minds, and to imprint them on our memories, by a sedulous and determined direction of our thoughts and attention to these subjects of everlasting interest. How much precious time might we thus profitably redeem from mental indolence and listlessness, or from vain thoughts and frivolous occupations; and how often, when so employed, might it be our privilege to say with David, "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord."

3. To keep the saying of Christ implies *the love of his truth, abiding and operating, as a governing and sanctifying principle, in the heart and affections.* No knowledge of Christian doctrine, however clear and comprehensive, no retention of it in the memory, however exact and perfect, will produce any saving benefit, unless the heart be suitably affected by the truth thus understood and remembered, and filled with a sincere and lively attachment to it. It is by this test that the knowledge which is the result of a divine illumination, may be distinguished from mere theory and speculation, and from a barren intellectual apprehension. The former, under the gracious agency of the Holy Spirit, interests the heart, and excites in it correspondent dispositions; while the latter leaves it habitually cold and obdurate. It is "with the *heart*" that "man believeth unto righteousness." It is the sin and misery of "them that perish," that "they received not the *love* of the truth that they might be saved." The good seed of the gospel is then said to be sown on good ground, and is likely to bring forth fruit, when "they that have heard the word keep it in an honest and good *heart*," a heart made such by the renewing influence of the Divine Spirit. Our blessed Lord had therefore the best possible reason for saying to his apostles, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings;" for no man will keep his sayings who is not first made to love them; and there can be no true love to his sayings, until the love of Himself be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. Hence it follows, that none but *pardoned* and *justified* persons, who love the Saviour because he first loved them, and has washed them from their sins in his own blood,—and none but *regenerate* persons, in whom the carnal mind which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be, has been superseded by that spiritual mind which affects and loves divine things, and brings life and peace,—none but these are qualified for keeping the saying of Christ, in that sense of the phrase to which the promise of the text is annexed. Those sayings of Christ which

require "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," must, first of all, be studied, remembered, and cordially received. When in this appointed way of penitence and faith we obtain remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of adoption and of renewing grace, then are we enabled to keep the other sayings of Jesus, honestly, cheerfully, and uniformly. It is the principle of grateful love to our pardoning God, that "makes our willing feet in swift obedience move;" and we "find it perfect liberty to serve" the Lord Christ.

4. *Practical obedience to the general requirements of the gospel*, is another thing implied in keeping the saying of Christ. He only can be allowed rightly to know and remember, or sincerely to love, the truth as it is in Jesus, who is, in the course and habit of his life, "a doer of the word." Listen to the solemn admonition of the great teacher himself: "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and *doeth* them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it." No further argument can be necessary to prove that, to keep Christ's saying, we must *live* under its influence; we must keep it as the *rule* by which we are to be governed, and as the *way* in which we are to travel on our journey to our Heavenly Father's kingdom. From the gospel we must derive our principles of action, and our maxims of conduct, in every relation and concern of life. It must be our conscientious purpose and strenuous endeavour, in dependence on his all-sufficient grace, implicitly to believe the doctrines of Jesus, thankfully to embrace his promises, humbly to obey his precepts, and devoutly to observe all his wise and holy institutions.

5. The character described in the text includes, lastly, *a steadfast adherence to the truth of Christ, and the persevering profession and advocacy of it, according to our means and opportunities, to the close of our earthly pilgrimage.* To

"keep" Christ's saying is opposed to the treacherous desertion or cowardly abandonment of it. We are therefore exhorted and encouraged to *continue* in his word, that we may be acknowledged his "disciples indeed;"—to *abide* in the doctrine of Christ, since he who does so abide, "hath both the Father and the Son;"—to *continue* in the faith, grounded and settled, and not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel;—and to *hold fast* the form of sound words, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Thus only shall we be able to say, to the honour of divine grace, when we are about to quit the field, "I have kept the faith;" and receive from the condescending mercy of our judge that testimony of final acceptance and approbation, "Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

II. Having endeavoured to illustrate the CHARACTER described in the text, let us now proceed to consider THE PRIVILEGE which is represented as ATTACHED TO THIS CHARACTER,—"HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH."

We are all, of course, but too well aware, (were it only from the recent visitations of Divine Providence,) that this promise must not be understood as entitling believers in Christ to expect an *exemption from natural death*. That cannot be the sense in which our Saviour tells his faithful followers that they shall "never see death." For it is appointed unto *men*, (to holy men as well as to wicked men, to men who keep the saying of Jesus, as well as to those who reject or violate it,) once to die. The most devoted and useful servant of God may adopt the solemn sentiment of JOB, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." ENOCH and ELIJAH, indeed, have already been exempted from the operation of this general decree; and we are told that a similar exemption will be extended hereafter to those who shall be found "alive and remaining" at the second coming of Christ. "The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be *raised* incorruptible," while these surviving saints shall only be

"*changed.*" With these few and rare exceptions, there is no discharge from that warfare which we are called to wage with "the last enemy."

ALMIGHTY GOD unquestionably could have as easily extended to all his people the benefit (if benefit it really would have been) of "*translation, that they should not*" in any sense "*see death,*" as to the eminent persons already mentioned. But there seem to be good reasons, even now apparent to us, (and doubtless there are others which we know not at present, but may know hereafter,) for the contrary determination which has taken place in the divine councils.—If the plan of universal *translation* for all the righteous had been adopted, it could only have been accomplished by a constant system of counteraction to the present tendencies of our physical nature; it would have required a perpetuity of miracles. But it is not the usual method of God to display any thing like a *waste*, a superfluous, systematical, and continuous exhibition of miraculous power, by frequently interrupting or disturbing the settled course and order of things previously established, without any object of great and paramount necessity or use.—Moreover, by first dying, and then entering into perfect glory by a resurrection of the body to a life immortal, the people of God become more exactly conformed to their adored Saviour, who "was dead," but now "is alive for evermore." And surely even this, by those who love Christ aright, and cherish a becoming sentiment of affectionate regard to every thing which appertains to him, will not be felt to be a consideration of no importance. Is there no honour, no privilege, in our being appointed, even thus, to "know the fellowship of his sufferings," and "made conformable unto his death," that we may afterwards experience the full "power of his resurrection;" that we may not only, through the merit of his sacrifice and the mighty agency of his grace, "walk in newness of" spiritual "life" on earth, but also, finally, rise immortal, after his example, from the dust of the tomb, and "lead captivity captive" by a visible and public triumph over death and the grave?—Another reason

for the plan actually adopted, in preference to that of *translation* to which we have adverted as possible, is, that by its selection a standing memorial is established, in the sight of the whole world, of the terrible evil of sin; since "the body is dead because of sin," even where "the spirit is life, because of righteousness." The just and legal desert of transgression is thus exhibited in a very impressive manner before all eyes; and the awful truth, that the proper wages of sin is death, including the dissolution of the body, as well as the perdition of the soul, is sooner or later brought home to every individual, and exemplified in every family, and circle, and community of men.—Again: if it had pleased God to ordain that sinners only should die, and rise again to judgment, and that all the saints should be *translated*, the consequence would have been that the promised resurrection would have lost all that is agreeable and pleasant in its prospect; it would have been connected only with anticipations dark, gloomy, and terrible; and the second advent of our Saviour himself would have been divested of half its splendour.—And, finally, upon the plan of *translating* all the righteous, and leaving all the wicked to die, this, too, must have been the result, that the future judgment would have been in a great measure forestalled and superseded; we should, in that case, have known, by the very *manner* of each man's departure from this world, what was the judgment of God on his character, and what would be his final condition; and thus much of the moral influence now connected with the prospect of that great and trying day would have been lost; and, in some instances, a terrible calamity would have been inflicted, by this premature disclosure of eternal destinies, on the feelings of survivors.—These, and other similar reasons, which have usually been assigned by divines* for the death of saints, seem quite sufficient to vindicate this part of the ways of God, in his ordinations respecting his pardoned and beloved people. It is meet and right, and best upon

* See, particularly, Dr. Guyse's Sermon on John xi; 25, 26.

the whole, that "the righteous perisheth," and that "the merciful men," the holy, the benevolent, the useful, are "taken away" to their eternal home, in the ordinary course and method of death.

As the words, "He shall never see death," do not convey any promise of exemption from natural death, so neither do they *merely* assure good men of *continued existence in a future state*, in opposition to the extinction or annihilation of their being. For not to see death, in this sense, that is, not to be annihilated, not to pass from this life into absolute non-entity, is a lot by no means *peculiar* to such as keep the saying of Christ. Everlasting existence is the portion, and will be the curse, of the finally impenitent and ungodly. Of them it may be emphatically said, "They shall seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, but death shall flee from them." Their being shall be their torment, and the inextinguishable nature of that being will be the greatest aggravation of their torment. God, in his mercy, save us all from a doom so dreadful!

What then does the privilege, here promised, actually include? It seems to me to imply, first, that those whose hearts and lives have been under the influence and direction of the gospel, *shall not see death in its natural and original horrors*: they shall have no painful and overpowering experience of it, *in its proper hostile and vengeful character*.

Death, considered abstractedly, in its primitive purpose and design, without reference to the grace of the gospel, or to the promises and provisions of the new covenant, cannot possibly be contemplated by any well-instructed mind with other feelings than those of apprehension and dismay. Viewed in its origin, its nature, its usual circumstances, and its more obvious and immediate results, it has all the aspect of an enemy. It has that aspect to him who beholds it only with the eye of sense. It is frequently preceded by disease and pain and suffering, by feebleness and languishing; sometimes by convulsive agonies and struggles. It effects a solemn separation between the body and the soul, and dis-

solves the mysterious intimacy in which they have been connected. It turns our strength into weakness, our beauty into loathsomeness, our activity into perfect impotence. "When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man then is but vanity." It locks up our senses; rends asunder every social and domestic tie; and consigns our flesh to the worms and the grave, while it dismisses our spirits to "a world unknown," a new and untried state.—Still more terrible and hostile is the aspect of death, when viewed by the awakened conscience of unsaved sinners. To such he comes as the appointed executioner of the divine vengeance on transgressors of the holy law; "takes" the offenders "by the throat;" and says, in the name of God, "Pay me what thou owest." For he has received power and authority to seize the rebels, and to fulfil upon them the sentence of justice. Over such "Death reigneth;" having a *legal* right to make prisoners of them, and to exhibit them as the sad trophies of his dominion. Hence we also find death compared in Holy Scripture to a serpent, possessing a venomous and fatal sting—"piercing, painful, and poisonous;" and we are told that this "sting is sin," and that the strength of sin is the law." It is our violation of God's law, and our just exposure as transgressors to its vengeance, that has armed death against us as an enemy, given him legal power over us, and furnished him with that sting which shall penetrate the hearts of unpardoned sinners with everlasting anguish.—Thus hostile is the aspect of death, if viewed in its own original form and character, even by the eye of sense; and much more, when seen in near approach, and with the menace of an immediate and perhaps a fatal encounter, by men who have no saving interest in the Lord Jesus, and have never fled for refuge from the curse of the law to Him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. We cannot wonder that such persons, if they have any right views of their true position and prospects, are afraid to die.

But let us now mark attentively the very different case and circumstances of one who has received and kept the saying of Christ. He has obtained, through faith in the great atoning sacrifice, the free pardon of his transgressions. He is no longer, therefore, a *condemned* sinner, except as he ever penitently condemns himself, and is willing to "grieve his life away, for having grieved his God." "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." By such the approach of death is contemplated with emotions, not indeed less serious than those before described, but less terrific. In them the eye of faith has been opened; and the glorious light of revelation shining upon them, they behold death as divested of its enmity, and the very curse, by the abounding grace of the gospel, "turned into a blessing, because the Lord their God loved them." Christ hath so far "abolished death," with respect to all his believing and obedient followers, by satisfying the demands of the law which sentenced them to death, that they are not now, strictly and properly, under its *merely legal* power. They are still appointed to die; but it is in virtue of a wise and gracious constitution of their reconciled Father, which has determined on death as, on the whole, their best and most advantageous way of entrance into life eternal. To such as die in Christ, death is not, as in the case of men "under the law," and practically "without Christ," a pure and unmitigated penalty. As a penalty, indeed, it must ever be regarded, if viewed in its origin, its painful accompaniments, and its direct and visible results; but it is a penalty so modified, and sanctified, and overruled, as to be substantially converted into a benefit. It becomes one of the "all things" which "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." And it is therefore put into the inventory of the Christian's privileges: "Life,—*death*,—all are yours;"—because all part and parcel of God's great and comprehensive plan for promoting in the highest degree your everlasting advantage.

Now when men are thus "found in Christ," and "keep his saying," it is plain that *they* cannot any longer "see

death," as death is seen by others who have no such new relations, no such spiritual immunities, no such glorious hopes. To them death comes with an amicable commission, from Jesus their best friend, and is the messenger not of angry justice, but of love and mercy. His arrival is not, in their case, the signal of approaching perdition, but that of final and complete salvation. He comes for purposes of release and deliverance; to terminate their state of affliction and temptation and spiritual peril; and to bring them the summons and the gracious passport to joy unspeakable and full of glory. Enlightened by the doctrines of Jesus, which render life and immortality a matter of divinely attested certainty,—possessed of that Spirit of Jesus who witnesses their adoption, through faith in the blood of the cross, into the family of God, and their evangelical right and title to an inheritance in heaven,—and supported by the promises of Jesus, which engage that all needful succours and consolations shall be afforded, to sustain the infirmity of their natures in their latest hours,—the faithful servants of Christ are usually enabled to welcome death. They contemplate him as not now so much a foe, as he is a friend; not as the executioner of the threatening, but as the instrument of fulfilling the promise. His aspect towards them is changed; and he often seems to smile on them, rather than to frown. The natural terrors of his countenance have, in numerous instances, so entirely vanished, or been so mercifully overpowered by the glory of God's special presence, and the opening splendours of eternal day, that the dying saint, though previously accustomed, perhaps, to think of the moment of dissolution as exceedingly formidable, and to shrink from the anticipated mortal strife with feelings approaching to timidity and gloom, has been heard eventually to exclaim, in sweet surprise, "Tell me, my soul, can *this* be death?" Thus has the happy believer "found his latest foe under his feet at last," and gratefully enjoyed the triumph achieved for him by his Lord.—Even this *is* death certainly; and in a very solemn sense, too, of the expression: But it is not that form and character of death, to which man subjected

himself by sin; it is not that unmitigated penalty or curse of death, which was the legal punishment of the original offence.

But these words, "He shall never see death," were probably intended to include, *secondly*, the promise of *a joyful resurrection*, as well as that of a safe, and tranquil, and victorious death. Some render the text thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall *not see death for ever*:"—that is, he shall not always remain under the stroke of death, even as to the outward man; but shall be gloriously raised from his dusty bed in the morning of the last day. Christ has so completely conquered and deposed death, that as it hath no longer any merely legal power to seize the bodies of the saints at all, but visits them under a commission expressly granted by himself in mercy and in wisdom, so neither can it retain its permitted tenure of them for one moment longer than he shall be pleased to consent and appoint. For he, (O most comforting and important truth!) he, our almighty and ever compassionate Saviour, *he* "hath the keys of hades and of death;" and he will at the proper period unlock the gates of the grave, and set at liberty all who "loved his appearing," and died in the steadfast faith and cheerful expectation of this "day of redemption." The hour cometh, when the dead shall hear his voice, and come forth; and to them who sleep in Jesus, there shall then be "no more death for ever, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; for the former things shall have passed away." Together with their burial-vestments they shall lay aside all the marks and relics of their former mortal degradation, and shall "put on beautiful garments;" their once "vile bodies" being "changed, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

I shall not, according to the judgment of some eminent commentators, have stated to you the *full* import of the privilege we are considering, if I do not add, *thirdly*, that

the text implies a promise of *exemption from the second death,* and of *eternal life by Jesus Christ.* "If a man keep the saying of Christ he shall never see death, that is, death eternal: he shall live for ever."—The awful punishment denounced against "the fearful and unbelieving," and against various other classes of sinners who wilfully reject or practically violate Christ's saying, is that "they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death." This death eternal is the just desert and legal penalty of sin. The worst and most tremendous part of that infinite calamity, thus described as the doom of the ungodly, will doubtless be their *complete, and final, and everlasting separation from the blessed God,* who is the only fountain of true life and comfort; a separation aggravated by their own torturing consciousness and conviction of the dreadful fact, that they are thus *hopelessly* and irrevocably excluded from the presence and the mercy of God, and must eternally remain abandoned and abhorred by him. From this "death that never dies," our divine Saviour will assuredly deliver all who "keep his saying." It is his firm and dearly-cherished purpose that such "shall never perish." The grace which saves them here from the guilt and power and pollution of sin, which makes and keeps them his holy and devoted followers, which gives them peace and consolation in their dying moments, which has extracted from death its sting, and will make even the grave restore the spoils of its boasted victory, that grace shall crown and consummate its previous triumphs by opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers; "and so shall they be ever with the Lord."

HAVING offered these general illustrations of the CHARACTER and the PRIVILEGE which the text describes, I shall now proceed to show you how eminently they were exemplified in the Life and Death of my lamented friend, lately removed from earth to heaven. It will not be difficult to prove, that the passage of Holy Scripture which I have ventured to select for this occasion is strictly applicable to him whose departure we universally deplore. Probably you have already been reminded, as I proceeded in the discussion of the subject, of what you know to have been *his* character while he lived among us, and of those holy hopes and consolations which you have heard that he experienced in the near approach of dissolution. I could think, indeed, of no one text which seemed more appropriately to introduce the Sketch which I shall now attempt to furnish of his peculiar and specific excellencies, and the delightful Narrative of the goodness of our God and Saviour to him in the closing scenes of life.

I. 1. Mr. WATSON was distinguished by his profound acquaintance with Christian Truth;—the result of an early, persevering, serious, and careful study of the mind of God, as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. He studied not merely the critical and philological import of Christ's saying, not merely the words and etymologies, but the *doctrines* contained in it; and those doctrines, not as separate and insulated truths, but as parts of a grand and magnificent whole, which he surveyed in their connexion and order, their mutual bearings and relations, their harmony and collective glory. This practice accorded with his naturally great and active faculty for generalization; a faculty which habit had strengthened, and rendered very delightful to him in its exercise. In all his private studies and pursuits, he had evidently more

pleasure in *synthesis* than in *analysis;* and was glad to make his escape, as soon as he properly could, from details to great principles. In some instances, perhaps, this taste for the philosophical classification of the results of his inquiries led him to hasten prematurely to his conclusions; but when, as in the case of his scriptural studies, the materials of perfect information were fully and at once before him, he seldom fell into this error, or if he did inadvertently commit it, he soon discovered and repaired the temporary mistake.—His sense of the importance of the saying of Christ was evinced, (as I am informed by one* who for two years had the honour and privilege of being an inmate of his house,) by "his very careful and personally interested manner of reading the Scriptures in his domestic devotions. So absorbed did he frequently seem to be in contemplation and mental inquiry, so awake to the charm or value of every paragraph, every sentence, and so anxious to *retain* the impression, that he would pause many times in the course of reading, sometimes as if unconscious of the presence of the family, and occasionally comment on anything that struck him. He certainly had an insatiable appetite for truth," (I should say he had a *passion* for truth;—in other respects he was not a man of passion; though he had great *tenderness* of feeling, he seldom exhibited signs of strong emotion; but for truth he had an ardent and intense regard;) "and fed upon it as the bread of life: or, to change the metaphor, he rejoiced in God's words as one that findeth great spoil."

This close study and comprehensive knowledge of Christianity produced eventually, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as was to be expected in a mind honest and sincere like his, a firm and steadfast faith in it, as a system divine in its origin, and of infinite interest, importance, and obligation. When a student not yet twenty years of age,—ardent in his aspirations after knowledge, but left very much to himself in the choice of books,—without the

* The Rev. W. M. Bunting.

means, probably, of obtaining those standard works which to an intellect of his peculiar cast and order would have been most useful,—unaided and unprotected in his somewhat eager and adventurous inquiries by any sufficient course of previous mental discipline,—and not always favoured with the guidance and advice of judicious instructors well versed in theological discussions,—he was exposed to more than ordinary temptation and danger. Escaping, however, by the mercy of God, from early perils of this nature, it does not appear that even then he so erred from the truth, as to renounce essential doctrines. After his inquiries had been well directed and matured, and his judgment duly trained to those habits of cautious and comprehensive investigation, in which he subsequently excelled, his attachment to the fundamental verities of the gospel was ever firm and exemplary, and grew in strength and influence to the very close of life. His conviction of those verities was very little founded on metaphysical reasonings, or on analogical congruities, real or imagined, but rested *primarily*, and almost exclusively, on the divine authority which has made them known. As in ETHICS he had adopted, and was wont to vindicate, that hypothesis which takes the *will of God* as the true ground of moral obligation, and the primary rule of right,—(the rule of right he unquestionably meant *as to us*, God's creatures and subjects, who, as such, owe to him an entire and absolute submission of the understanding and the will, both as to the abstract rectitude of the laws he adopts, and as to our obedience to them, when enjoined,)—so in THEOLOGY, he contentedly reposed on the *word of God*, "the saying of Christ," as the all-sufficient and satisfactory foundation, the only certain, clear, and binding rule of Christian faith. "Thus saith the Lord," and "Verily, verily, I say unto you,"—these announcements were with him the "end of strife," and closed at once all doubt or disputation as to the facts attested, and the doctrines revealed. Thus, after quoting, in one of his pamphlets, some subtle reasonings, in refutation of objections made on analogical grounds to what he deemed an important

truth of Scripture respecting the Divine essence, and stating his own persuasion of the *metaphysical* soundness of that refutation, he eloquently exclaims, "But a truce to these reasonings; I willingly give them all up for a single word of the *testimony of God.* I affect them not; they seem to bring me too irreverently near to Him. I would not break through and gaze; and I feel while I write, how just and yet how reproving are the words of the Poet of Paradise,

> 'Dark with excessive light his skirts appear,
> Yet darken heaven, that brightest seraphim
> Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.'"

In this passage we have a fine specimen of the *spirit* of Mr. WATSON as a theologian.—His statement of the Evidences of Christianity, in the First Part of his Theological Institutes, is comprehensive and convincing; and that portion of it which treats on the Proof from Miracles appears to me particularly accurate and discriminative.—On the province of reason in the investigation of religious truth his views are largely developed, in a most masterly style, and with an admirable spirit of fair and candid inquiry, in the conclusion of his "Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, and on the Use of Reason in Matters of Revelation." More of just, and in some respects *original** thinking, seems to me to be there embodied, than can elsewhere be found, as far as I recollect, on that subject. The same important topic is more briefly treated, but with great ability, in the Eleventh Chapter of the First Part of his Theological Institutes.

Among other proofs of his knowledge of the saying of Christ, and of his attachment to the study of revealed truth, it may here be mentioned, that, amidst all his other cares and labours, and under the pressure of frequent pain and affliction, he had made considerable preparations for writing original Notes on the New Testament, chiefly, I

* In the use of this epithet, I refer particularly to Mr. Watson's observations on "doctrines which *contradict*" as well as transcend human reason.—See p. 65, et seq.

believe, of a doctrinal and practical character. It will be matter of deep and general regret that this project, the latest literary labour of his life, was only partially accomplished. In the last private conversation with him, with which I was ever favoured, and which occurred about six weeks before his death, he expressed with much feeling his wish, if it should please God, to live long enough to complete, at least, his observations on the Epistle to the Romans, and on that to the Hebrews. These books, he thought, would afford him the opportunity, which from the most pure and conscientious motives he earnestly desired, of leaving on record his deliberate views concerning various points of christian theology, which he deemed to be of vital importance to men's salvation.

It can hardly be necessary here to state, as a fixed result of Mr. WATSON's long and patient application to scriptural studies, that he ranked himself unhesitatingly among orthodox Trinitarians, of the most strict and decided class.—He was also an *evangelical* Arminian;—an Arminian, that is, of the school of ARMINIUS himself, and of Mr. WESLEY, rather than of the very different one in which some of the *professed* disciples of those great men, and especially the later followers of the eloquent and learned leader of the Dutch Remonstrants, have been disposed to take up their position.—The careful and able discussion of the Calvinistic controversy, which is found in Mr. WATSON's "Institutes," is prefaced by some admirable observations, part of which I shall here quote, because they are, in my judgment, eminently important and correct; and because they furnish, in his own words, a further illustration of his habitual appeal to "the saying of Christ," in defence of what he deemed to be the truth, in preference to every other mode of proof or vindication. They shew that "reasoning out of the Scriptures" was, in his view, the proper method of conducting such inquiries. They are also highly honourable to his catholic and candid spirit; and convey, by implication, a deserved rebuke to those fierce polemics who deal

in imputations and revilings against Calvinists, nearly as indiscriminate and unjust as those which some Calvinists persist in pouring on their opponents;—for to this day there are persons who ignorantly confound all Arminians with Arians, or Pelagians, or Semi-Pelagians; and who bitterly "bawl against Arminians," though probably they "have never read one page of the writings" either of ARMINIUS, or of those who alone legitimately inherit his illustrious name.—"The Calvinistic controversy," says Mr. WATSON, "has always been conducted with great ardour, and sometimes with intemperance. I shall endeavour to consider it with perfect calmness and fairness; recollecting, on the one hand, how many excellent and learned men have been arranged on each side; and, on the other, that, whilst all honour is due to great names, the plain and unsophisticated sense of the word of inspired truth must alone decide on a subject with respect to which it is not silent. In the system usually called Calvinism, there are, I think, many great errors; but they have seldom been held except in connexion with a class of vital truths. By many writers who have attacked this system, the truth which it contains, as well as the error, has often been invaded; and the assault itself has been not unfrequently conducted on principles exceedingly anti-scriptural and fatally delusive. These considerations are sufficient to inspire caution.—According to the plan of this work, the whole question will be tested, first and chiefly, by scriptural authority. High Calvinism indeed affects the mode of reasoning *à priori*, and delights in metaphysics. To some also it gives most delight to see it opposed on the same ground; and to such disputants it will be much less imposing to resort primarily, and with all simplicity, to the testimony of the Sacred Writings."*

* Theological Institutes, vol. iii., p. 1, 2.—See also, on the topics above-mentioned, Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary, *Art. Arminianism*, and *Art. Pelagius*;—and a small tract, entitled, "The Question, What is an Arminian? answered," in Wesley's Works, vol. x., p. 358—361. Nor can I omit this opportunity of earnestly recommending to those who wish to know the true history and character of Arminius, and of Arminianism, and to obtain correct

2. My departed friend not only acquired a deep and extensive knowledge of the truth, but excelled in the faculty and practice of retaining it.—He continued his theological and scriptural studies almost to the utmost verge of life. Hence his attainments were always progressive, and his profiting appeared unto all men. This was much promoted by his habits of private thinking and meditation. He had always on his mind some subject of interesting investigation, to which he at every interval of mental leisure directed his thoughts; and *street-meditation*, even in his walks through this busy metropolis, was an art which he had successfully cultivated. For the same purpose of retaining and perfecting his knowledge, he almost invariably turned to like account his conversations with friends, when private meditations were interrupted, and thus at once elicited the views of

information on many points connected with the subject, "The Works of Arminius," translated by my excellent friend Mr. James Nichols, "to which are added, Brandt's Life of the Author, with considerable augmentations, numerous extracts from his private Letters," &c. &c.;—and another work, by Mr. Nichols, entitled, "Calvinism and Arminianism compared." Both these publications, including an immense mass of highly entertaining and valuable materials, biographical, historical, and theological, arrayed in the various forms of Prolegomena, Reprints of scarce and curious documents, elaborate Notes, and extensive Appendices, display uncommon learning and research; and justify the encomium of Dr. Wordsworth on the author, as "better acquainted" with the history and the writings of the age on which he writes "than almost any other person of our time." I may add that the Quarterly Review also designates Mr. Nichols as "intimately conversant with the history of that age, and better acquainted than any other person with what were then the bearings and effects of religious opinions;" and states, that his last-mentioned work "ought to have a place in every historical and in every ecclesiastical library." Without pretending to concur in every statement which Mr. Nichols has introduced into volumes of such multifarious character, I have taken the liberty of thus respectfully calling the reader's attention to them, not only as affording information respecting *genuine* and *degenerate* Arminianism (so called) which is not elsewhere collected; but also as suggesting to serious readers, who are willing to receive instruction from the history of the past, and to learn wisdom by what others have suffered, some admonitory lessons peculiarly seasonable in the present day. Many portions of them are well calculated to shew to the various sects of English Christians the mischief of *extreme opinions* on certain subjects,—the danger of needlessly mixing up themselves, in their *religious* character, with merely civil strifes, or with fierce political parties,—the duty of continuing to pray, "Give peace in our time, O Lord!"—and the universal truth, confirmed by all experience, of that inspired assertion, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."—It is much to be desired that Mr. Nichols should be enabled speedily to complete each of the works specified above, by the additional volumes so long promised, and by copious *Indices* to the whole.

others, and made his own more fixed and clear by recitation of his former thinkings on the subjects introduced.

3. But "what avails superior light, without superior *love?*" It is of great importance that I should remind you, in further illustration of the text, as applicable to Mr. WATSON, that he received the truth in the *love* of it, so as by it to be saved. To him the gospel "came in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,"—in the assurance not of firm *intellectual* persuasion only, but also of heart-felt, and comforting, and sanctifying experience. Minute or ample details of his early Conversion to God I have not been able to obtain; but there is no doubt of the interesting fact. He repeatedly referred to it with lively gratitude on his dying bed. "God seized on me," he said, "just at the right time. I should have been very wicked, if I had not been converted while young. I should have become *very hardened.*" When yet a child, indeed, he was for a time profitably impressed under the preaching of the late Rev. GEORGE LAMBERT, of Hull, which he then occasionally attended, in company with his father, who was an Independent Dissenter. This circumstance, Mr. GALLAND informs me, he thankfully acknowledged many years afterwards, when, being stationed at Hull, he preached a funeral-sermon in Waltham-street Chapel, occasioned by the death of that venerable minister. The good feeling, thus excited, does not appear, however, to have been deep or permanent. One who knew him, while a boy, at Lincoln, remembers him as a careless and irreligious youth, addicted to acts of petty mischief. In that city he was led to attend the preaching of the Methodists; not, however, in the first instance, in order to obtain spiritual instruction, but rather to unite with many others in disturbing the congregations, by throwing horse-beans against the front of the gallery, during worship, and by other similar methods of frolicksome annoyance. Detected in this thoughtless but criminal proceeding, he was reported to his father, who administered suitable correction, which his lofty spirit so resented, that

he determined, at the moment, never again to enter a Methodist Chapel. That determination, happily, he was induced to alter; and after some time, began to feel the power of truth, attended in consequence the meetings held for purposes of prayer, and entered into the Methodist Society. Soon he was deeply and painfully convinced of sin; and earnestly sought a personal salvation from its guilt and power. Nor did he seek in vain. About the age of fourteen, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he found "rest unto his soul;" obtained a comforting sense of pardoning mercy; and was made "a new creature in Christ Jesus." He was now filled with peace and joy through believing; and was remarkable, among his new associates, for his activity and zeal. Thus the gospel was made unto him, "the power of God unto salvation;" and the love of Christ, and of his saying, became the great master-principle of his heart.—Of his private christian experience in later life, I am not furnished with any such particulars, as could be properly or profitably introduced into this brief statement. He was habitually and perhaps constitutionally reserved, (though not without some exception,) on these points of his personal history and feelings, till near the period of his final sickness; when he became, even on such subjects, exceedingly frank, and evinced to those about him the simplicity of "a little child," in beautiful connexion with the manliness and wisdom of an established and highly intellectual Christian. It is more than probable that his religious state and enjoyments varied very considerably, in the interval which elapsed between his first early (I think *too early*) engagement in the duties of the ministry, and his subsequent voluntary secession from those duties, at the age of twenty, for a period of about two years, which he chiefly spent in secular avocations. A large portion of that period of secession was marked by sore and bitter mental exercise; for he longed, as it was natural that he should, on due consideration, for restoration to his former sacred occupation as "a fisher of men," and could not be happy or *at home* in any other calling. So extremely painful were his

convictions of the duty of relinquishing once more "the affairs of this life" for the service of the sanctuary, and of the souls of men, that, travelling on one occasion from Birmingham to Redditch, on business, his reflections quite overpowered him; and he said, in afterwards describing them, "I think it was impossible for a fiend of hell, or a lost spirit, to feel more truly *wretched* than I did in that hour." The inward rebukes of the Holy Spirit were soon followed by a providential visitation of severe bodily affliction, which further taught him what was his duty to God and the church, and fully disposed him to its performance, when opportunity should serve. Regaining, at length, his proper station in the holy ministry, he recovered the spiritual strength and enjoyment which untoward circumstances had impaired; and he soon proved that, in returning to his original vocation, his soul had "returned to her rest." The genuine fruits of righteousness were very visible to those who had the happiness to be best acquainted with him, and could not but command their esteem and love, notwithstanding any infirmity of temper, or manifestation of defect and frailty, which they might occasionally discover. Ever since I knew him, I have had reason to observe that his piety was progressive like his knowledge; and latterly its increasing vigour and maturity have been exceedingly conspicuous and edifying. This "growth in grace" was not merely co-temporaneous with his growth in divine knowledge, but, I believe in a high degree, the direct result of his increasingly clear and comprehensive views of the great scheme and system of the gospel, attended as they were, in his case, by the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." An intimate relation always exists in good men between truth and holinesss;—truth being, according to a correct allusion of Lord BACON, the *seal*, and holiness the *impression*, while the Holy Ghost himself is ever to be worshipped and adored as the great agent. But in Mr. WATSON this relation was peculiarly marked and striking. His religious feelings were almost exclusively the effect of principles; and were less influenced, probably, than in some minds

of different construction, by external impulses or circumstances. "Beholding" therefore "with open face," and with a gaze more simple, steadfast, and distinct, "the glory of the Lord," he was, as he advanced in years and in theological attainments, "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

4. This will more fully appear, if we advert to the *practical excellencies* which adorned the *private and public life* of my deceased friend. These were great and manifold; and we thankfully "glorify God in him."

As a Christian, he was, habitually and decidedly, a man of truly *spiritual* mind. He lived under a strong impression of eternal realities, and was elevated far above the sphere of merely earthly and grovelling delights. "His thoughts," says the near observer and inmate, whose testimony I have before quoted, "were much in heaven. He had acquired very endearing and exalted views of the happiness into which the righteous enter, immediately after their deliverance from the burden of the flesh. He highly estimated the recompenses, as well as the repose, of their final state; and under these impressions and hopes kept an habitual watch over his motives and affections, labouring that, whether present or absent, he might be accepted of the Lord."—His spirituality, however, was always connected, in its outward manifestations, with discretion and good sense. He never *affected* it; never disgraced it by quaint and ludicrous associations; never practised those unfelt and trifling common-places of religious loquacity, which some mistake for pious discourse. Truth and purity,—useful and improving sentiment, expressed in reverent and serious language, and recommended by becoming dignity and gravity of demeanour,—distinguished his communication with others on divine things. His general conversation in society was various and discursive; often highly talented and fascinating; always, as to its prevailing spirit and tendency, in perfect keeping with the character and profession of a christian man. "It was scarcely possible," says his young friend already cited, "to hear him preach, or converse regu-

larly, without acknowledging the presence and charm of a highly intellectual, poetical, and sanctified mind. To apply to it a metaphor, by which he himself, some time ago, illustrated another subject,—'it was like a rainbow; not an imaginary one, so distinct in its lines of colour, and with edges so sharp and defined, that they seem to be intended to cut or impair each other; but the rainbow of nature, with its distinct yet commingling hues; soft, beautiful, varied, ONE.'—He did not indulge alternately in fits of abstraction, then of fancy, then of religious fervour. Strength, beauty, *sanctity*, were always there."

MR. WATSON was a man of *devotional habits*; and possessed, in a degree of richness and constancy seldom found in equal combination, the *gift* and the *spirit* of prayer. In this exercise he excelled alike in the great congregation, in the social circle, and in his own family. "He seemed," as his friend and former colleague, the REV. JOHN HANNAH, well observes, "to possess an inexhaustible fund of sentiments and expressions, adapted to every variety of want, of suffering, and of blessing. A special unction often accompanied his prayers. His hearers were bowed and raised; bowed under an overwhelming apprehension of the insignificancy of the creature, and the majesty of the Almighty Creator; and raised to a solemn, yet delightful contemplation of the glory which covered the mercy-seat with healing light, and filled the heart with comfort inexpressible." This *excellence* in prayer, I have mentioned here as resulting mainly from his *devout spirit*, and from those *devotional habits* to which I have adverted. Without such habits it could not have been acquired or maintained. It was the Holy Spirit's gift; but bestowed on one who had first earnestly sought it, and who carefully exercised and cherished it when vouchsafed.

He was exceedingly *conscientious in the use of time*, and in endeavouring to turn life to good account; "working while it was day," because he felt that "the night was coming, when no man can work." It was partly his resolute and unyielding conduct, under the deep sense of responsibility, in

redeeming time, and in tenaciously adhering to his own plans of employing it, that made him sometimes seem austere, and almost uncourteous, to those who would, for frivolous objects, have intruded on his hours of study or of business. And, perhaps, I ought to admit, that, while he very properly denied his society to mere idlers, he did not *always* feel, in this and a few other respects, so strongly as might have been desired, how much is reasonably due to the claims and sensibilities of tried and faithful friendship. All the infirmities, however, to which I now allude, were but as spots on the sun's surface; and they were of rare and transient occurrence. They were occasioned often, it is probable, by the pressure and irritation of that physical disease and suffering under which it was long his lot to labour. By his friends, he was greatly and deservedly beloved for his habitual *benignity*, both in spirit and in conduct. In his general intercourse with them, he connected with an admirable dignity of deportment a most winning *condescension*, and frequent manifestations of a generosity and gentleness altogether delightful. He assumed no haughty airs; he was too *great*, to be egotistical or vain; and his opinions were seldom enforced by an offensive dogmatism, never by any disdainful unwillingness to allow fair audience and consideration to those who differed from his views. If he had a failing at all, in this respect, it was in the opposite direction to that of self-conceited obstinacy. I have known, I humbly venture to think, a few instances in which my honoured friend was induced, on questions of which he had not fully examined for himself the real bearings, to resign his own generally sound and sober judgment much too readily to the guidance of very inferior minds, who happened to have access to him at the moment, and who misled him (unintentionally, of course) by their partial statements. Ordinarily, no man was more independent of all such influence; and if he now and then yielded to it, it was unwittingly,—in the hurry of other occupations which engrossed him,—and in the indulgence of a not unpardonable weakness, of which, I

believe, there have often been examples in the history of other great and distinguished men, immersed in the cares and toils of public life, and glad to be relieved occasionally from the labour of a strict and cautious investigation of details, by relying, sometimes too implicitly, on the representations of those about them.

Among the practical manifestations of the Christian character of Mr. WATSON, I may now mention the repeated proofs he gave of singular *disinterestedness*, and utter contempt for the mean and sordid class of vices. Had his duty and his inclination permitted him to devote his time and talents to authorship, as a profession, it is well known that he might, for many years past, have easily found the way to worldly affluence and honour. But instructed, doubtless, by the painful lessons of his earlier experience, and enjoying now that more vigorous spiritual health which made the Christian Ministry, with its appropriate studies and engagements, to be his supreme delight, he gladly counted all things loss that he might win Christ, and serve the best of causes. The profits of those literary labours, on subjects strictly connected with his sacred calling, which, in addition to all ordinary services, he did find time to prosecute, and in which he often spent the hours which ought, perhaps, to have been employed in sleep or mental recreation, were in a very considerable degree devoted to purposes of religious charity; and nearly all his valuable existing copy-rights were generously presented by him to the Connexion of which he was a member, and to which he has thus made himself in perpetuity a distinguished pecuniary benefactor.

His kind and *catholic spirit* towards Christians of other denominations who "hold the head,"—his calm, and settled, and thankful *repose in the care of Divine Providence*,—and his pious *submission* to afflictive dispensations, and *patience* under severe pain and suffering,—these, also, were virtues in the exercise of which he was most exemplary, and by which his steadfast faith in the truth of Christ, and the governing

influence of that truth upon his mind and heart, were evinced to all who had opportunities of frequent intercourse with him.

But his *Christian zeal*, and *active philanthropy*, must be more largely stated. As his years and knowledge, his piety and influence, gradually ripened into that maturity, to which many of the preceding observations must be understood to be chiefly and especially applicable; so did he manifest a more intense desire to "live not unto himself" but unto Christ, and to be useful to the church and to mankind.

This desire was apparent in the general style and spirit of his *preaching*. It governed him, particularly in later life, in the selection of his texts, and in his manner of explaining and applying them. It is, I think, a correct remark of one who was his colleague a few years ago, that latterly he, on purpose, and in the hope of more general usefulness, "put forth less of the blossom, and more of the fruit; less of formal and elaborate metaphor, and more of solid sentiment, than formerly." There was still indeed "great majesty in his teachings," and often a beauty of expression equal to the grandeur of the thought. But there was a chaste simplicity too, and a conscientious effort to "condescend to men of low estate." He evidently laboured to fix the saying of Christ in the understanding; to interest all classes of those who heard him in the truth he enforced; and to produce sympathy with his own feeling of its importance. He was, in this respect, a very "pains-taking" preacher; and dealt much and powerfully, in many of his sermons, with the consciences of his audience. Hence his congregations at large were usually instructed and profited by his discourses; while, to hearers of taste, and cultivated minds, they also frequently afforded the most exquisite intellectual gratification. I am informed that the celebrated Robert Hall, after hearing him once at Leicester, on these words—"I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,"—delivered the outline and substance of the sermon in his own pulpit on the following

Sabbath, with strong commendations of its excellence. And I once was present, when a venerable minister of another community, who had listened with pleasure to Mr. WATSON's discourse on—"All things were created by him and for him,"—unable to withhold the expression of his fraternal esteem, addressed to him with much feeling, in the presence of many hearers, the words of MILTON:

——"Up led by thee
Into the heaven of heavens I have presum'd,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air."

Who of us has not repeatedly experienced, under the ministry of our now sainted friend, the like hallowed and delightful emotions?

His benevolent zeal was also evidenced by his diligence and tenderness, mixed with becoming firmness and fidelity, in the discharge of *pastoral* and *disciplinary functions*; which he justly reckoned to be a most useful and responsible department of ministerial service.—The same principle, in connexion with a deep conviction of the infinite value of divine truth, and of the solemn obligation to extend its light and influence, prompted him to write and publish his various works. No motive less constraining than the belief that God had been pleased to endue him with the power of rendering some useful service in this way, and that "the supply of the means is the requisition of the duty," could have urged and sustained, in such labours, and in the studies which prepared him for them, a man in his situation. "It is surprising," says Mr. HANNAH, (whose words I am again kindly permitted to borrow,) "that amidst disadvantageous circumstances, incessant public employment, and frequent sickness, his progress in learning and science was so considerable; and it is honourable to his *devoted zeal* that it was so happily applied. He affords an encouraging example to young men, in similar situations, of the possibility of surmounting formidable difficulties, and of grasping that prize of enlarged knowledge, which is placed beyond the reach of sloth and inactivity."—It was this enlightened and ardent desire to do good,

in quarters where it was most needed, and was likely to be most extensively influential on the general interests of our connexion or of our country, that dictated to him the particular subjects of several of his best publications. His "Institutes" were chiefly written with a view to the theological improvement of the junior Ministers and the younger Local Preachers of our body, an object which he rightly deemed to be of primary importance. His elegant and instructive book entitled "Conversations for the Young," was designed to promote, among the better-educated children of the families of Christian people, the profitable reading of the Holy Scriptures. His benevolent interest in the great work of educating aright the rising generation of the poorer classes, and his earnest wish to assist in giving a safe and salutary character to the Sunday-school system, now in such extensive and useful operation, were strongly marked in an admirable sermon, preached before the Sunday School Union in the year 1818, and entitled, "Religious Instruction an Essential Part of Education." This discourse is well deserving of the attention of all who feel a patriotic and Christian concern in the momentous subject of national education; and establishes, with inexpugnable demonstration and commanding eloquence, the great principle, that such education must be scripturally religious, in order to be permanently beneficial,—a principle from which no inducement of alleged political expediency can ever justify us in departing.

The Christian philanthropy of Mr. WATSON has, however, been most eminently displayed in reference to two other subjects, which involve the welfare of immense multitudes of immortal men. I refer, first, to the great question of the free and unrestricted instruction in religious knowledge of the *Negro Slaves* in the British Colonies, and their speedy and entire emancipation from that unjust bondage in which their race has been so long detained. On the former point, Mr. WATSON has deservedly acquired a place in the highest and foremost rank of British Philanthropists, as the eloquent and triumphant advocate of the necessity, the

obligation, and the benefit of the Christian Missions established in those colonies for the conversion of the slaves. His unanswerable "Defence of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in the West Indies," and his celebrated "Sermon on the Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the West Indies," have associated his name and memory with imperishable honours, and rendered a service to the cause he pleaded which can never be forgotten. On the point of emancipation, much light is incidentally cast in the publications just mentioned; but the whole case, as a question of Christian Ethics, is fully discussed, on the principles of the Scriptures, and of eternal justice, and with exemplary calmness and sobriety, in the third volume of his "Institutes," p. 292—296.—The second department of active and extended benevolence, to which allusion has been made, was that which devolved upon him as a distinguished Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; which office, in one form or other, he filled with pre-eminent ability, and greatly to the advantage of the institution, from the year 1818* to the period of his lamented death. In the pulpit, in public meetings, in the private deliberations of the Committee, in official communications with kindred Societies, or with persons of authority at home and abroad, in the preparation of reports and other documents for the press, in maintaining the necessary correspondence, on the spiritual interests of the various foreign stations, with missionaries labouring abroad, and in affording preparatory counsel and assistance at home to accepted candidates for similar employment, he found a field of exertion, worthy even of *his* exalted powers and peculiar attainments; and in that field he occupied himself with a zeal and devotedness of spirit, and a degree of general acceptance and success, which will rarely be equalled,—never surpassed. The sentiments introduced, since his death, into the Annual

* For the two preceding years he had acted as one of the Secretaries for Missionary Affairs to the Executive Committee and Conference, before the Society, on its present plan, had been regularly organized.

Report of the Huddersfield Auxiliary Society, will express the universal feeling:—"In the removal of this truly great man, the Missionary Cause has sustained a loss, which, did the Committee only view the subject *as men*, they should call irreparable.—All his talents, and they were mighty,—all his acquirements, and they were vast,—all his experience, and it was extensive and mature, he especially devoted to the prosperity of that cause which had in him a successful advocate in the pulpit and on the platform, and an able defender from the press. The Committee can only say, bowing before the darkened throne, *The will of the Lord be done!*"

5. It only remains, in reference to the *character* of Mr. WATSON, as exemplifying the description of the text, and the general illustrations before attempted of its import, that I should mention his *steadfast perseverance* in the profession and defence of the truth, as proving that he "kept Christ's saying." While yet engaged in the mere process of inquiry, or in *working out*, as he used to term it, a subject of theological interest, by a friendly discussion of its various bearings and difficulties, he might to some, who misunderstood his object, and knew not his habits, present the appearance of an occasional *unsettledness* of opinion; and there was a season of juvenile ardour and inexperience, to which allusion has before been made, and during which unquestionably he was found "in slippery places." His extreme youth, the peculiar character of his mind, the frequent want of regular training and guidance in his studies, and other circumstances, all combined to make that period of his life "the hour of temptation.' That he always and entirely resisted the temptation, so as to be wholly saved at that time from *speculations* neither safe nor profitable, I am not careful to affirm. The blame, if blame there were, must rest in part, in my judgment, on the glaring defect of that *system* which leaves young men so situated without due protection against hazards so serious; hazards which might, in this case, have proved fatal to a youth of most extraordinary mental power and promise. I know, however, of no proof that *even then* he really *relinquished* any of those

great truths which we account sacred and vital. Certain it is, that no difference with us in doctrine induced his subsequent union, for a few years, with the "New Connexion" of Methodists; for that now considerable and respectable body never professed to adopt any *doctrinal* standard hostile to our own. Solid study, increasing piety, and a growing sobriety and correctness of judgment, very soon produced in my distinguished friend their natural effects; and, by the blessing of God, he has long been "stablished, strengthened, settled," in all essential truths. He was not one of those who are censured as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;" and what he had deliberately received as the "saying of Christ," he zealously and fearlessly defended. He kept that saying in his own creed; and loved the creeds of the ancient Church, because he considered those formularies as signally instrumental in maintaining "the faith once delivered to the saints;" as able summaries of the *whole sense* of what is revealed in Scripture on the subjects to which they refer; as seasonable and useful protests, at the time of their first appearance, against the multiform and almost endless heresies by which the truth has been assailed; and as valuable records of the doctrinal views of those Christians who, in former ages, were eminently called to "witness a good confession." He kept the saying of Christ in his pulpit-ministrations, which were richly evangelical in sentiment;—often very *expository* in their character, and designedly interspersed with somewhat lengthened illustrations of several other texts of Scripture (which he had occasion to quote) besides the one on which his discourse was chiefly founded. Anxious to promote a careful and exact study of the Divine Word, he more than once, in the course of his ministry, adopted the plan of *lecturing*, on week nights, upon particular books. I have heard in various places of the instruction and edification derived by his hearers from these exercises; and especially of the value and utility of a series of this kind, commenced by him in the City-road Chapel, London, on the Epistle to the Romans, but which he had not opportunity to prosecute

further than to the sixth verse of the ninth chapter. His lectures on the eighth chapter have been mentioned as peculiarly excellent, and confirmatory of the great truths and privileges of the Gospel.—His attachment to the sacred oracles, and to the verities they teach, was strong and ardent to the last. In the progress of his final sickness, it was affectingly indicated by many circumstances; and especially by his once exclaiming to a friend, before the hope of recovery had been abandoned, "If I live to enter a pulpit again, oh—how I will endeavour to preach! and my first text shall be, '*All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*'"—Finally, he kept the saying of Christ "pure and undefiled," according to his own honest and conscientious conviction, in those writings by which "he, being dead, yet speaketh." With the illustrious names of JOHN FLETCHER and JOSEPH BENSON, that of RICHARD WATSON will be associated, in the history of Methodism, as a prominent and successful defender of the character and labours of its immortal Founder, and of some of its most important doctrines, when publicly assailed by men of no mean fame. I allude not merely to Mr. WATSON's "Life of the Rev. JOHN WESLEY," but to his "Observations" in answer to some parts of Mr. SOUTHEY's work on the same prolific subject. It has been reported, that a Royal Personage, now no more, having been induced by curiosity to read those "Observations," was pleased to indicate the impression left on his mind by saying, "Richard Watson has the advantage over my Poet-Laureat." I vouch not, of course, for the *fact*, though it has some authority; but the *sentiment* is one which, with great respect for the eminent talents of Mr. SOUTHEY, and for what I believe were his honest intentions, I must think to be perfectly correct. Nor does Methodism only, but, above all, our common Christianity, acknowledge my lamented friend as its able and steadfast champion. Having once bought the truth, he could not be induced to sell it. There is much in his character that reminds me of the following remarks of Bishop HALL: "I have always been wont to admire the humility of those profound wits

whom depth of knowledge hath not led into by-paths in judgment, but who, walking in the beaten path of the church, have bent all their forces to the establishment of received truths; accounting it greater glory to confirm an ancient verity, than to devise a new opinion." The commendation pronounced upon Archbishop LEIGHTON seems also to be not inapplicable, and may properly conclude the delineation I have humbly attempted of him, whose removal we now deplore:—"His sobriety of mind, and soundness of judgment, were great. These qualities were conspicuous in his never pretending to develope the secret things of God, notwithstanding the variety of his learning, and his turn for high speculation. In reverently standing aloof from those mysteries of the divine nature and government, which are enshrined in a light no mortal eye can gaze upon, he discovered a judgment equal to his modesty, and exemplified the saying of Solomon, that *with the lowly is wisdom.*"

II. As my honoured friend exemplified, in the various respects now specified, the CHARACTER described in the text, so, blessed be God, he happily realized the PRIVILEGE which it promises to the faithful. I now call your attention, with unutterable thankfulness, to *his dying peace and victory.* Some very interesting details, furnished by various friends, I shall shortly lay before you; but allow me first to make a few general observations on this part of the case.

In the time of comparative health and strength, death was not always a subject of the most agreeable contemplation to Mr. WATSON, but rather one of anxious anticipation. The *circumstances* and the *pain* of dying somewhat alarmed him, and he shrank from the prospect of the convulsive and mortal pang which he apprehended might prove so fearful. But, as the time drew near, he was blessedly prepared and strengthened both for the period of sickness and for the final conflict; and he was "more than conqueror at last." His illness and death exhibited, in a very unusual degree, the calm, deliberate triumph of *faith in Christ's saying.* His was not the mere exultation of joyous feeling, directly excited in the soul

by an act of overwhelming mercy, without any particular mental exertion, or application of sacred truth; it was not the result simply of those secret refreshings which are poured into the heart without any previous exercise of the understanding. These God often vouchsafes to minds that need them;—to those whose intellectual faculties have been so untrained, or so unfurnished with materials, as really to render them accessible to spiritual consolations, only or chiefly by direct and immediate agency on the affections. Of this we are sure, that God will afford *sufficient* aid and comfort to all his dying servants, be their mental structure and attainments what they may. But it seems that, in Mr. WATSON'S case, the "help in time of need" was adapted to the *idiosyncrasy*—to the peculiar intellectual character of his mind, in a way very pleasing and instructive. The Holy Spirit strengthened his faith, rather than directly excited his joy. Triumphant principles were exhibited, rather than powerful emotions; or, perhaps, I should say, that his joy, though both felt and uttered, was seen in such prominent connexion with his faith, that the *effect* was almost overlooked, while the by-standers gazed in devout admiration on the *process* of strong and commanding confidence, by which it was produced. Hence, to me, it seems that he died *humbly* indeed, *very humbly*, as a sinner ought to die, yet *very majestically*, also, (if I may venture so to speak,) through the grace of God which was upon him,—a grace which, I think, could have acted in that particular way only on a mind like his own, strong and vigorous, accustomed to lofty contemplations, richly furnished with the saying of Christ, and familiarized by habit to the most sublime and heavenly views of truth. The effect of this was, as you lately heard from my revered friend Mr. ENTWISLE, that his death-bed scene exhibited such a rare "combination of humility, tranquillity, and dignity" as that venerable minister had never before witnessed. His very fears of agony and struggle in his last moments were not realized. Even the act of dying was quiet and sublime, and evinced no particular pain or suffering. His prayers, and those of thousands on his

his behalf, were, in this respect, mercifully answered. The transactions of the last month of his life appear to have been marked by uncommon calmness of spirit; and if there was *submission* to the stroke, it was not a sullen or compulsory submission, but a deliberate exercise of faith and patience. He *resigned* his body to the tomb,—his soul to God; and in death only made that sacrifice complete, in the spirit of which he had previously lived. Thus, in a sense very important to himself, and very encouraging to those of us who have yet to "sicken and to die," he did not "see death."

The Narratives, which have suggested to me the preceding reflections, I shall now introduce, nearly in the order in which they were forwarded for my use by their respective writers.

1. To Mr. WATSON'S affectionate colleague, the Rev. JOHN BEECHAM, I am indebted for the subjoined statement of what occurred in some of their later interviews.

Several months ago, Mr. Watson's declining state of health began to awaken serious apprehensions in his own mind, and to lead him to regard death as at no very great distance. He often adverted to this subject; but I recollect very distinctly a conversation I had with him about the middle of autumn, in which he dwelt on his situation and prospects with much feeling. He observed, it seemed hard to have to die at a time of life which might be regarded as the palmy state of man, and when, from the greater maturity of his judgment, and his more extensive experience, he felt as though he could do more for the church than he ever had done; "but," added he, "if I am cut short, it will not be by chance. Life and death are at the disposal of an infinitely wise and good Being, and all will be right."

After he had suffered for some weeks from those periodical attacks of pain, to which he became subject in the latter stage of the complaint, he had a paroxysm, the violence and duration of which so prostrated his remaining strength, that it was feared he could scarcely survive another such attack. On the morning of Sunday, December 23d, 1832, on my calling to see him, he told me he feared he might have a relapse, as he had several unfavourable symptoms. His apprehensions were realized, and he passed the following night in great pain. On my seeing him again, he said to me, "All prospect of my recovery is gone. This return of pain proves that the cause of my affliction remains. I have no hope now. There is no ground of rational hope left; nothing now remains for me but to address myself to the great work of preparing to suffer and die." It was no common privilege to have the oppor-

tunity of witnessing a mind of such an order thus coolly essaying to grapple with the awful realities of death and eternity; and the scene was invested with deeper interest to me from my recollection of his remarks on a recent providential dispensation, (the death of the late Rev. JOHN JAMES,) very affecting to us both. On that occasion, he observed, with great emotion, that it required the loftiest exercise of faith to keep firm hold of the doctrine of a future state, when we thus saw man struck down, and triumphed over, and humiliated by death.

On the morning of Christmas-day, I found him again so free from pain, that he could converse without difficulty. I was no sooner seated by him, than he began: "Well, you see we are at length thrown back on those great principles which we preach; 'Life is yours,' 'Death is yours,' 'Things present,' 'Things to come,' 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' Now, here are two points: first, are these things so? and, —— have you an interest in them?" Having paused, as if in solemn consideration of these questions, he then said, with strong feeling, "Yes, these things are so; these principles are true; and, blessed be God, I have an interest in them; but it is all through the blessed Spirit." After an interval of a few moments, he exclaimed, "What a light was that! What a day when the blessed Spirit first struck the light of heaven into our dark minds!"—and then went on to enlarge on our obligations to the Spirit of God for our religious illumination and enjoyment, showing that the impotent, depraved mind of man could have no religious experience whatever, were it not for that divine Agent. On my remarking that it was a glorious reward for the faithful minister of Christ, in the season of deep affliction and suffering, to prove, as he did, the reality and consoling power of the great truths he had spent his life in maintaining and enforcing, he replied, with emphasis, "Yes, a minister has higher enjoyments and privileges than Christians in general; but he is exposed to greater temptation. His is an awful responsibility; and greater is the guilt of any unfaithfulness in him. I feel these things to be so." He then dwelt on his own unworthiness, and the abasing sense he felt of the worthlessness of his very best performances, and said his only hope, his only refuge, was in the pure atonement of Christ. He proceeded to enlarge on the sufficiency of that atonement; and showed what an infinite mercy it is that we have such a resource, and that we know what use to make of it. Then, placing his attenuated hands together, and looking up to heaven, with his eyes partly closed, while his quivering lip marked the deep feeling of his soul, he quoted the following lines:—

"His offering pure we call to mind,
There on the golden altar laid,
Whose Godhead with the manhood join'd
For every soul atonement made;
And have whate'er we ask of God,
Through faith in that all-saving blood."

Then pausing, and looking, for a few moments, unutterable things, he added, with uncommon pathos,

"I the chief of sinners am;
But Jesus died for me."

It was the following morning, if I remember right, that he formally gave up all public business. He had told me some days before, that he wanted to talk with me on a few points as soon as he was able; and being comparatively easy that day when I called on him, he laid on the table a small portfolio, in which he kept papers relating to the Mission; and opening it, showed me what he had been writing in reference to matters which we had previously deliberated on; telling me I must now take up those subjects where he had broken off, and must finish them. After further conversation, on my preparing to leave him, I gathered up only the papers we had been examining; when, taking them out of my hand, he placed them with the others in the portfolio; and, folding it up, said, "Here, take all together; if I get better, you know, I can take it back again; and if not, I must leave you, and you must leave me."

On a subsequent day, as I sat alone with him, he told me that his arrangements for death were now nearly completed; and talked with me about destroying his useless papers, and respecting the manuscripts he should leave behind, and on his private affairs in general, with a calmness and composure which almost made me forget that I was conversing with one who regarded himself as a dying man. And this cool fortitude was not an occasional effort of the mind. In this respect, I invariably found him the same. His dying was his common topic; and he would dwell on it with a composedness which strikingly indicated that all was right within. And it is worthy of remark, that no favourable change which his case might occasionally present, ever diverted him, as far as my observation went, from the great work of preparing for death. For a week before he evidently changed for death, the worst symptoms of his case so far abated as to awaken some hopes again respecting him; and he said to me one day, "I may, it is possible I may, rally so far as to be able to advise with you again. But," added he, looking up, while the tears glistened in his eyes, "if not, blessed be thy Name, I am resigned to thy will."

On my incidentally mentioning to him that his friends at a certain place had agreed to have a meeting for prayer in his behalf, he leaned forward, and covering his face with his hand, he wept, and said, "What am I, that I should have an interest in the prayers of so many good people!" He repeatedly observed to me, during the latter part of his illness, that were he to be raised again, he believed it would be chiefly in answer to prayer; and to this cause he said he must greatly attribute it, that his sufferings were so much mitigated, and that such a worm as he should enjoy so much of the divine presence and goodness in his affliction.

The morning of the last Sabbath of his life but one, and the very last on which he could sit up and converse, was a gracious season to him. As I sat alone with him, I made an observation respecting the Sabbath; on which he exclaimed, "Blessed day of rest!"—and then dwelt on the hallowed enjoyments of the Sabbath, and its rich provision for the spiritual wants of man. After we had spent some time in prayer, during which the divine goodness appeared to overshadow us in an indescribable manner, I, on parting, said to

him, "May the Lord of the Sabbath be with you!"—to which he responded with deep fervour, "Amen, Amen!" He had a high sense of the importance of the sabbatic institution for advancing the cause of religion; and has more than once said to me, with great feeling, when I have called on him on the Lord's day, and found him unable to stir out, "Another blessed Sabbath must, in regard of public worship, be a blank to me."

On the last day on which he was able to discourse at length, I sat with him a considerable time, and had full proof that he remained in the same elevated and heavenly frame of mind which he had manifested throughout his affliction. Such dignity united with such deep humility; such intellectual strength and vigour attended with so much child-like simplicity; such patience under intense suffering; and in the intervals of pain such indications of ineffable intercourse with God, and such outbeamings of hallowed joy,—have been but rarely witnessed, I conceive, in any dying saint.

2. My respected friend, the Rev. George Marsden, has communicated the following particulars of his conversations with Mr. Watson.

I had two interviews with Mr. Watson, during his last affliction. At the first, after a few expressions relative to his illness, and the extreme pain he had endured, he almost immediately entered on the pleasing subject of Christ Crucified. He dwelt for some time on its infinite importance, as the only foundation on which we can rest for pardon, acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life. He then, in a very impressive manner, spake of his own unworthiness, and of his firm reliance on the atonement, and repeated, with solemn and deep feeling, those expressive lines,

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
Into thy hands I fall:
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour and my all."

In the course of conversation, he was led to refer to some parts of his past life, and especially to some controversies in which he had taken a decided part; and he then remarked, "I have sincerely endeavoured to do the will of God, though frequently with much defect. Sometimes, by maintaining what I believed to be right, I have been brought into collision with some of my brethren, and subjected myself to the strife of tongues; but I do love the preachers." He appeared to have very little doubt but that the affliction would terminate in death, and not to have even a lingering wish to live. He said that he had, for some time, a desire to live for a few years longer, that he might accomplish some things which he thought might be useful, if it had been the will of God; "but now," said he, "the very desire of it is taken away." After prayer, I remained with him a few minutes longer, at his request, during which, his conversation was of the same exalted and heavenly nature.

My last interview with him was on Saturday, December 29th. His mind appeared to be peculiarly calm and tranquil; and, almost immediately on my

going into the room, he entered on spiritual and heavenly subjects. He seemed, as in the former conversation, to be desirous of dwelling on the delightful subject of the atonement, as if his whole soul centered there. He said, "The Methodists have right views of the atonement, and they also know the way of coming to the atonement, and the right use to be made of that important doctrine." After speaking for some time on that point, he began to converse about death, and said that he had now no particular desire either for life or for death. He added, "Dying and death are two distinct things. There is something gloomy and melancholy about *dying*; whereas death is nothing, but as it opens the way to glory. His views then appeared to be raised to the heavenly world; and, as if contemplating the glory of God, and of the future state, while his soul was humbled in the dust, in the near prospect which he had of entering into the divine presence, he said, "I seem like a worm, creeping into the glory of God, and coming before the throne." Such a scene of calm tranquillity, divine solemnity, and heavenly peace, I scarcely ever before witnessed.

3. I shall next invite your attention to a very interesting communication with which Mrs. DIXON has most kindly favoured me, respecting the last three or four weeks of her honoured father's life.

It was my father's constant practice, when he and my mother were prevented by sickness from attending the public ordinances on the Sabbath, to read with her in the forenoon the church-service, of which he always expressed himself in the strongest terms of admiration. He would go through the whole service, not omitting the psalms, the epistle, and collect for the day. My mother read the Litany, whilst my father, devoutly kneeling, responded with the deepest and most fervent devotion. In the evening, he selected a sermon (generally one of Mr. Wesley's) to be read to him, and then, with peculiar feeling and solemnity, would read one of our hymns, and conclude with prayer. On Sunday, Dec. 16th, a day never to be forgotten, he went through the Liturgical service, in the forenoon, as above described. In the afternoon, he exclaimed, "Another silent Sabbath! This is the sixth Sunday that I have been prevented by illness from lifting up my voice in the sanctuary!" Then, handing me the hymn-book, he said, "Read me some of those blessed hymns; I find them very refreshing." He then selected the following:—"*O God, of good the unfathom'd sea;*" "*Great God, indulge my humble claim:*" "*With glory clad, with strength arrayed;*" "*The earth and all her fulness owns;*" "*O Sun of Righteousness arise;*" and "*Join all the glorious names.*" In the evening, I read, at his request, Mr. Wesley's sermon on "The Way to the Kingdom:" text, Mark i. 15. As I proceeded, he exclaimed, "How strong; yet, how admirably simple! How beautifully clear and conspicuous! How forcible and convincing! No man ever saw the way to the kingdom more clearly than WESLEY, and no man ever made that way so plain to others. The more I study his writings, the more I

admire them." After reading a hymn, he prayed for nearly an hour, with astonishing and overwhelming power and energy, remembering, not only his family individually, and pleading, nay, *wrestling* powerfully with God, on their behalf, but also for the church in general, and especially our department of it, with an intensity of feeling and earnestness of supplication remarkably impressive and affecting.

The following incident is so characteristic that I cannot omit it. On the last day on which my dear father was able to come down stairs, I found him in great pain, with his head resting on the table, buried in papers and manuscripts. I was deeply affected, and remonstrated with him on the imprudence of suffering his mind to be occupied with business, when he was physically so incapable of attending to it, and besought him to allow me to lay it aside for the present. With a melancholy tone he said, "Well, I believe you must. I fear I must yield; but you know my motto, '*Nulla dies, sine lineâ.*'" So truly did he "his body with his charge lay down, and cease at once to work and live."

During his illness, my father frequently repeated the following striking saying of Hooker: "Since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time; I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but let thy will be done!" When in great pain, he would often quote this passage from Jeremiah: "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses; and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

Speaking of the majesty of God, my father made the following remarks: "Oh! the glorious majesty of God! The peculiarities of the Christian religion are founded on the majesty as well as the mercy of God. The Old Testament writers dwell most on that subject. It is softened down in the writings of the New Testament. How mistaken are those who think it inconsistent with the divine majesty to regard the *individual* interests of man! 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' This particular care is so far from lessening, that it rather heightens the conception of this perfection, as an ocean that fills up all the creeks, sinuosities, and indentations of every shore; and the ocean employs a series of secondary agencies, such as rivers and streams, which it sends forth, and then receives them all back again into its own bosom. So does God *fill all in all.*"

On the Sunday preceding Christmas-day, my dear father was free from acute pain, but in a state of great exhaustion, from previous suffering. He seemed to be fully aware of his danger; but his mind was perfectly tranquil. Observing me weeping bitterly, he said, "Compose yourself, my dear; keep your mind calm: commit the matter to Him who knows, not only what is right, but what is best. My flesh and my heart fail, but God is my rock. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that when he shall appear I shall appear with him. Yes; I shall see him as he is." On my expressing a hope that the disorder had passed its crisis, and that he would from that time begin to

recover, he said, "Your affection makes you sanguine; but I wish neither to hope nor to fear, since He in whose hands I am knows best when to call his people to himself." In the evening of the same day, he requested me to read, from the Supplement, a few of the Hymns on the Nativity, remarking, that many of them were exceedingly striking and beautiful. Whilst I was reading, he responded to the sentiments contained in them with great fervour, and dwelt much on the majesty of the mercy of God in devising so magnificent and glorious a scheme of salvation. I then read that beautiful translation from the German, "*Commit thou all thy griefs*," and "*Give to the winds thy fears*," which, he said, comforted him greatly. Soon after, the pain returned with great violence; and, from that time, he relinquished all expectation of recovery. He continued in great agony until Monday evening, when he experienced some relief. On the following morning, (Christmas-day,) he sent for me early; and when I entered the room he smiled sweetly, and said, "My dear, this is Christmas-day. This is the blessed morning on which Christ broke upon this dark, dreary world, when

> "Plunged in a gulph of deep despair
> We wretched sinners lay,
> Without one cheerful beam of hope,
> Or spark of glimmering day."

Oh, what a blessed Saviour! And here he is; ever at hand to sustain and comfort helpless man, and gild the dark and gloomy hours of pain and languor with bright hopes of immortal felicity."

I mention the following incident, because it shows the perfect composure with which my father contemplated death. One night, on my offering to wind up his watch, he handed it to me, saying, with great emphasis, "Here, take it, and wind it up for me a few times more. I shall soon be 'where day and night divide his works no more.'" Then, clasping his hands, he exclaimed, "Eternity!—eternity!" and, sinking back in his chair, seemed absorbed in the contemplations which that momentous word had suggested; whilst his brightening features, becoming impressed with the vastness and loftiness of his conceptions, assumed an almost supernatural expression. I felt awed, as in the presence of one already beginning to realize the mysteries of the eternal and invisible state, and scarcely dared to move or breathe, lest I should interrupt his heavenly musings, or bring down his soul from those "celestial heights."

To a friend, who visited him on Saturday, December 20th, he said, "I am very ill, but I am where we have so often placed others, in the hands of the Lord; He has imparted sweet consolation to me during my affliction. We have not preached cunningly devised fables. Oh, no! There is real, solid, substantial comfort and support in religion. I have been many times heavily afflicted, and have been often brought, so to speak, *into the waters*, but I have always found the rock firm beneath. I have never been so powerfully impressed with a sense of my own worthlessness as during this illness; and, in the prospect of approaching the Majesty of God, my feeling is that of a worm

crawling into the brightness of the sun. I feel as if about to take my place near some glorious throne; but I wish to creep low, and feel my own nothingness." My dear father then expressed his satisfaction that the doctrine of the atonement was so fully and clearly inculcated by our ministers, and that he was leaving our people so free from doctrinal agitation. "If I desire to live," said he, "it is to assist in keeping the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel pure and unmantilated before the people."

On Sunday, December 30th, my beloved father became much worse, and seemed fully conscious that his end was not far distant. Whilst supporting his head, he looked at me for some moments, with intense affection, and said, in a very solemn and emphatic tone, "May the blessings of the upper and the nether springs be yours for ever." This was his parting benediction; and from that time he said but little, connectedly.

4. My concluding document is one with which I have been obligingly furnished by the Rev. JAMES DIXON, whose attentions to Mr. WATSON, in his last illness, were most assiduous, affectionate, and comforting. It will afford further valuable illustrations of our honoured friend's entire resignation to the will of God, of his profound humility, of his steadfast faith in Christ Crucified, of his kindly and affectionate spirit, and of his glorious triumph over death, during the solemn period to which it refers.

One of the most striking features of spirit manifested by Mr. WATSON during his affliction, and on the approach of death, was *a complete resignation to the will of God*. By a mind so observant and well furnished, even on physical science, the progress and probable termination of his disease could not be disregarded. Hence, previously to the apprehension of danger by his family, he was observed to manifest in his conversations and prayers the evidence that his thoughts were seriously turned to the prospect of an early grave. Many casual expressions respecting the probability of this event threw sadness and gloom over the hearts of those who loved him, whilst himself was rapidly taking the impress of a deeper piety, and labouring for entire submission to the will of God. He evidently watched the progress of the disease with anxiety, and on every new manifestation, or attack of pain, became more convinced of the probability of a fatal termination. The crisis at length arrived. He observed, that if another paroxysm came on, he knew what to expect. The usual time of suffering came, and with it to his friends, not to himself, the dreaded token. Whilst enduring this fit of excruciating torture, his medical attendant came in; and as he was leaving the room, Mr. Watson exclaimed, "*Good is the will of the Lord.* Remember, this is my testimony."

This resignation was not the prostration of a wearied and exhausted mind, bending to its destiny from the effect of palsied debility, or an incapacity any longer to indulge the natural love of life;—with him it was a voluntary and religious effort. He sought grace from God, obtained it, and then girt up the loins of his mind to

this great Christian duty. From this moment to the period of his decease, neither his spirit nor his language ever betrayed the least want of perfect resignation to his allotted destiny. He remarked on several occasions, "I could have wished to live a few years years longer, to finish some works and designs of usefulness which I contemplated; but the Lord can do without any of us;" adding, I have often admired the perfect resignation of David, when he said to Zadock, 'Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him.' So I say, if the Lord has no delight in me, here am I, let Him do to me what seemeth good to him." His constant language was, "I have no wish either to live or to die, but that the will of God may be done;" and on one occasion, when a member of his family expressed a hope respecting his recovery, he replied with great sweetness, "It is the anxiety of affection, without any basis of reason to rest upon." —Mentioning that his physician had attributed his disease to his habit of stooping to read and write, he remarked, that even if it were so, it was in the order of Divine Providence; for. said he, "I am fully satisfied with *what* I have done; but as to *manner*, that is another thing. I never engaged in any undertaking," referring particularly to his writings, "without being first convinced that Providence went before me, and called me to the duty."

To those who have been previously acquainted with the true elements of Mr. Watson's character, it will not be a matter of surprise that, in circumstances in which the heart discloses its most secret feelings, he displayed the deepest *humiliation* of spirit. He was never a man to boast. His most intimate friends never heard from him the language of self-approval, but often of self-reproach. His views of God, of his law, of the obligations of holiness, and of the many and great excellencies necessary to complete the Christian character, were so vivid, and his standard of ministerial and practical duty so elevated, that amidst the applause of others, and the highest popularity, he sank in lowly shame before God, and to his intimate friends was constantly employing the language of sincere self-condemnation. This feature of his character came out in its full proportion towards the close of his life. Whilst in health he was never remarkably communicative on subjects of personal religion, but he now became as simple and open as a child; nor had he been accustomed to give vent to his feelings by tears,—generally endeavouring to repress his emotions,—but he now yielded fully to the feelings of his heart, and tears of deep humiliation, intermingled with sacred joy, flowed, when conversing on religious subjects, in copious streams from his eyes.

On one occasion, when visited by a venerable and respected brother-minister, who remarked that it must afford him pleasure and comfort to have been able to state and defend the truth, to preach the Gospel to the edification of thousands, and especially to promote the cause of Missions, he said, that he thanked God that he had, he hoped, sincerely promoted the doctrines and discipline of the Connexion; but added, that he placed no trust in this. He then made some remarks in justification of the principles and motives by which he had been governed on some disputed points. This conversation took place in the morning; and towards evening he burst into tears,

and, addressing the person who attended him, exclaimed, "I hope I did not boast to Mr. ——— this morning. I thought it right just to state what were my motives on the subjects in question; but God forbid that I should boast." "Oh, no," he exclaimed, in the greatest agitation, "I am a poor, low, vile sinner—a worm, and no man."

In remarking on the goodness of God in his early conversion, he observed, "How great was his mercy in taking me up by his grace, and putting me into the ministry, at so early a period,—an unworthy, and, in some respects, a most obstinate and refractory sinner." His favourite expression, when speaking of his state, was to call himself *a worm*. One night, moved by a sudden impulse, as he lay in bed, he exclaimed, with tears flowing down his languid countenance, "I am a worm, a poor vile worm, not worthy to lift up its head; but then," he added, "the worm is permitted to crawl out of the earth into the garden of the Lord, and there, among the flowers and fruits, if it can, to speculate on the palace and ivory throne of Solomon."

"I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore,
And sing the wonders of his grace
For evermore."

It was remarked, "No doubt you will see his face." "Yes," he rejoined, "there is doubt of every thing, but the *great, deep, infinite* mercy of God,—*that is sure*."

This deeply humbled spirit was the element in which he appeared to exist, and prompted him to request the prayers of his friends, and to join most fervently in their supplications. Once, when through great debility he had fallen into the arms of his attendant, and was placed in the bed, he said, "Now, kneel down, and offer up prayer to God;" whilst he responded, as usual, to every petition. On the same day, (being Sunday,) he requested that the Gospel and Epistle for the day might be read to him, and afterwards said, "Read the *Te Deum*; I am fond of that when I cannot go out on the Sunday, because it seems to unite one in spirit with the whole Catholic Church in earth and in heaven."

Innumerable expressions fell from the lips of Mr. Watson, indicative of an entire and exclusive *trust in the atonement of Christ* for salvation. It appeared as if the Holy Spirit had taken up the blessings of the atonement, so ably exhibited in his preaching and writings, and applied them in fresh and saving efficacy to his mind. Every thing he uttered, on the subject of his own personal state, had a remote or direct reference to this great doctrine. "The atonement," he repeatedly remarked, "is the sinner's short way to God. On this rock I rest, and feel it firm beneath me.

'How firm he proves,
The rock of ages never moves,
Yet the sweet streams that from him flow
Attend us all the desert thro.'

Yes! I feel that I am on this rock; in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.

'Fix'd on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Lov'd with an everlasting love.'"

On another occasion he exclaimed, "O the precious blood of Christ!" The Epistle to the Romans, he remarked, was very rich, especially the third chapter, in setting forth the atonement:—'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.'—"This is the only way of a sinner's approach to God, but through it he is permitted to enter the holy place.

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

In speaking of the Divine Being, his mind dwelt almost exclusively on his *mercy*. The attentions of his friends and medical attendants, his comforts, and the smallest acts of kindness, drew from him frequent expressions of gratitude, and he would exclaim, with peculiar feeling and emphasis, "*It is all of mercy.*" When one of his attendants reminded him that the Lord had been very gracious in reviving him a little after a period of speechless lethargy, he adopted his usual watchword—"*It is all of mercy.*" This was the last religious remark he made.

On another occasion he observed, that he wished to keep his mind stayed on God every moment, but in consequence of his weakness and suffering he found it difficult. He wished to have his feelings constantly elevated to the great subjects of religion; but experienced, what he believed many others in similar circumstances often did, a difficulty in realizing consciously the blessings of religion. "All that I can do in my circumstances is to repose on the divine mercy, and it is of the nature of that mercy to pity the infirmities and sufferings of his children;" and on that mercy he did evidently repose in calm and tranquil confidence. He remarked one day, with great feeling, "There is no rest or satisfaction for the soul but in God. *My God:*—I am permitted to call him mine, though an unworthy sinner. 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: To see thy power and thy glory as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches: because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.'"

He exhibited great *tenderness* and *maturity of love* in his last affliction. If we judge of the state of this affection towards God by its manifestation towards man, we can have no doubt that it had by divine grace ripened into evangelical perfection. Nothing but feelings of entire tenderness and love were expressed to those around him. Speaking of the Preachers, he said, he loved the brethren; indeed, there was no class of men for whom he had so great an affection. He added, that he knew his manner had often appeared cold, distant, and reserved, and this had often been attributed to motives which had no existence. He also said, that we (meaning the Preachers) were exposed to peculiar mental temptations from crossings, prejudices, and passions, though of one brotherhood; and that it was necessary to guard against them, and cultivate brotherly love.

By a lively and believing apprehension of the heavenly and invisible state, in combination with an assurance of his interest in Christ, he gained a full and com-

gluous *victory over the fear of death*; and he was not only willing to die, but anticipated it with triumphant joy. When visited by one of his brethren, he remarked, that "the prospect was gloomy as regarded this life, but bright and glowing as regarded another;—like the shining of the sun (it was then shining into the room) through the mists and gloom of this winter's morning."

A few days before his death, having remained a long time in a state of lethargy, an organ struck up a sweet and plaintive psalm-tune under the window. This roused him; and, opening his eyes, he feebly said, "Oh, how sweet! All ought to be harmony on earth; every thing should praise the Lord; it would be so, were it not for sin; and in heaven this will be the case, where sin has no existence."

At one time, being in great pain, he exclaimed, "Oh how much labour and pain it costs to unroof this house; to take down this tabernacle and tent; and to set the spirit free; and when shall my soul leave this tenement of clay! I long to quit this little abode, gain the wide expanse of the skies, rise to nobler joys, and see God." He then repeated his favourite stanza:

"I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore
And sing the wonders of his grace
For evermore."

In a state of high ecstacy, he burst forth, but a short time before he was deprived of the power of connected speech, exclaiming, "We shall see strange sights some day!—not different, however, from what we might realize by faith. But it is not this,—not the glitter and glory,—not the diamond and topaz,—no, it is *God.—He is all and in all!*"

During three or four of the last days of his life, Mr. Watson sank into a state of lethargy, appearing almost insensible to those around him, and was nearly incapable of the use of speech. No conversation could be held with him on any subject; but at intervals he seemed to be engaged in devotional exercise. At length, after many hours of difficult respiration, the moment of dissolution approached; and without any apparent pain, or convulsive struggle, his sanctified and happy spirit left its tabernacle of clay, and entered the world of rest and love, at ten minutes past eight o'clock, on Tuesday evening, January 8, 1833.

I must now close these details.* I appeal to you, whether they have not described the character of a man who eminently "kept the saying of Christ," in whom divine truth "dwelt richly in all wisdom," and produced divine fruit;—and whether we have not reason to "thank God and take courage" on hearing such statements of the dying experience of our departed friend, as affording renewed proof that the Lord graciously supports his people in their last extremity, so that

* Some further interesting particulars, concerning Mr. WATSON'S latest interviews with his friend, Mrs. BULMER, will be found at the close of her letter, for which see the *Appendix, No. III.*

they, in the sense before explained, "never see death," but "pass through death triumphant home" to God.—Heaven has, in this instance, claimed its own. Earth has lost its view of one of the most brilliant "stars" which the "right hand" of Jesus ever exhibited, in our community, for our illumination and comfort. "He was a burning and a shining light." Let us be thankful that we were permitted "for a season to rejoice in his light," though the time of long-dreaded bereavement has at last overtaken us. May we be enabled, individually, to "hide in our hearts" those saving truths which he has embodied in his writings, and to derive eternal profit from our grateful recollection of the sermons and conversations to which, with so mueh pleasure, we have listened from his lips,—lips, alas! now silent in death, but which were, in no ordinary degree, "the lips of the WISE, dispersing knowledge," and "of the RIGHTEOUS, which feed many."

I cannot conclude this solemn service without suggesting a few hints that have occurred to me, as to the special IMPROVEMENT which we ought to make of this, and of other similar visitations of death, which have taken place in our community.

1. This event, in connexion with several of like deeply afflictive character, loudly calls us to seriousness, to self-examination, and to humiliation before Almighty God. *Seventeen ministers*,* of our body, have died since the close of our Conference in July last:—*seven*, in six months, out of those whose names were on the list of our London stations:—and, among them, two men of first-rate eminence, Dr. CLARKE and Mr. WATSON; two, at least, Mr. JAMES and Mr. STORRY, who were distinguished by great and peculiar usefulness in their stations;—*all* amiable, worthy, and exceedingly valuable in the places severally assigned to them by

* The number has since been augmented, I believe, to *twenty-six*.

Divine Providence.—*Two* out of the three Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society have been removed from us in less than two months.—Both of the persons appointed to attend our PRESIDENT to the next Conference in Ireland, have been called into eternity:—they are gone to join in the blessed conferences above!—the venerable and learned Dr. CLARKE was one; Mr. JAMES was the other.

Now, is it quite unseasonable or unimportant, amidst such unusual spoliations by death, for your minister to inquire, (and he does it with unfeigned humility,) Does not all this look like some special visitation, some "controversy" of God with us? Does it not seem to bid us, with lowly solicitude, "say unto God, Do not condemn me—show me wherefore thou contendest with me?"

Have we provoked the Lord to jealousy by idolizing any of his ministers, and by depending more upon his human instruments than on the agency of his own holy and eternal SPIRIT? Or, have we displeased him, on the other hand, by undervaluing and depreciating his servants; by treating them, or their office and its scriptural rights and claims, with unbecoming indifference and disrespect; or by hindering instead of helping them in their great work?—These, I think, are questions which the Methodists in general, and those of London in particular, on whose ministers the stroke of death has fallen with such astounding severity, ought individually to ask themselves at a time like the present. Truly excellent and affectionate as I know many of the people connected with the metropolitan circuits to be, they will do well to put such inquiries, as I have here ventured to suggest, to their own consciences with all fidelity.

Or, can it be, that times of peculiar temptation to the Church of Christ, and of peculiar anxiety to its best-instructed and most thoughtful friends, are now approaching;—that a proud, and fierce, and bitter spirit of strife and secular contention is likely to infect, defile, and disturb some parts even of the family of God;—and that, in judgment on others, or in mercy to themselves, the men who, in such a crisis, could

least be spared, are "taken away from the evil to come," and hidden from the strife of tongues, and from the fear of suffering, in the secret place of God's heavenly tabernacle?

Or, finally, can it be, that our Connexion at large has been somewhat ungrateful for the many holy and valuable ministers, with whom the great HEAD of the CHURCH has from time to time supplied us? Have we forgotten that such ministers are among the choicest gifts of the glorified Saviour to the people of his love; and that what is true of nations, is applicable to Christian communities also, namely, that God's usual providential method of making them great and prosperous is, to raise up amongst them great and good men, eminent for talents and virtues?* Have we really *needed* to be reminded of these things by dispensations so painful, by breach upon breach, and stroke after stroke?

2. But even if there be nothing of special rebuke or chastisement in recent visitations, there is, at all events, much of general admonition and instruction. Let us, then, humbly acknowledge the frailty of our common nature; let us be seriously impressed by a survey of the desolations which death is making in our families, in our friendships, in our congregations; and let us apply ourselves to the work of immediate preparation for our own approaching dissolution. "The voice" from the tombs of the departed "says, Cry:—All flesh is grass; and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but

* Allusion is here made to the just sentiment recorded on the well-known monument erected in the Guildhall of London, in memory of the elder PITT,—WILLIAM, EARL OF CHATHAM. After describing the national prosperity resulting, under the divine blessing, from PITT's talents and patriotism, the inscription proceeds as follows:—"The Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, mindful of the benefits which the city of London received, in her ample share of the general prosperity, have erected to the memory of this eminent statesman, and powerful orator, this monument in her Guildhall; that her citizens may never meet for the transaction of their affairs without being reminded, that the means by which Providence raises a nation to greatness, are the virtues infused into great men; and that to withold from these virtues, either of the living or the dead, the tribute of esteem and veneration, is to deny to themselves the means of happiness and honour."

the word of our God," with the hopes and comforts founded upon it, "shall stand for ever." "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom their Lord when he cometh shall find watching. If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. Be ye, therefore, ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

3. Let us be concerned for the bereaved churches of our Connexion, which have lost so many of their most able and influential ministers, and, by this last stroke, have been deprived of the individual who, at the period of his removal, was unquestionably their brightest living ornament. Let us have recourse to God. Now is the time to exclaim, in all the fervour of united and believing prayer, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" And, while thus employed, let us not be afraid to "encourage ourselves in God." Both the gifts and the graces of ministers come from him; and with him is "the residue of the Spirit." He can always find, or make, fit instruments for his own work. He can save by many or by few; by men of gigantic mental strength and stature, or by others of far inferior intellectual grade, specially made wise for the occasion by his wisdom, and filled with his Holy Spirit.—Amidst all the outward desolations of our Zion, we have good ground to hope in his unfailing mercy. This has been hitherto, indeed, a year of unprecedented bereavement by death, as it respects the preachers and pastors of our Connexion. But it has been, also, a year of unprecedented visitation in the way of gracious and extensive and numerous revivals of the good work of our God, in various parts of our body. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, neither his ear heavy;" nor is his "Spirit straitened," or "the sounding of his bowels and of his mercies towards us restrained." "My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." Now that our ranks are strangely thinned by the triumphant deaths of our late honoured comrades, let

us who survive draw nearer than ever to each other; and be more closely and firmly united in brotherly affection, in pious zeal, and in benevolent effort. Let us frown, with just indignation, on every attempt to weaken our strength by division, and endeavour to make up by our compactness and concentration whatever we have lost in point of number and expansion; looking to the Author of all good for such an increase of our interior graces, and energies, and resources, as shall compensate, and more than compensate eventually, for any diminution of external splendour and magnificence. Courage, my brethren! "The best of all is, God *is* with us;" and *will be* with us while we shall be "with him," by a faithful, united, and fearless exhibition and defence of those "banners" of pure doctrine and holy discipline, which our fathers and predecessors "set up in his name." They,—dear and sacred are their names and memories,—they are dead: but "the Lord liveth, and blessed be our rock, and let the God of our salvation be exalted."—Hallelujah. The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

APPENDIX.

WHEN the Sermon here published was preached, a few days after Mr. Watson's funeral, the Author, who, from want of time, had been obliged to study brevity in his hasty preparations for it, was also compelled, for the same reason, to omit in the delivery much of what he had actually proposed to offer, especially in reference to the CHARACTER of the deceased. Some of those passages, as well as other illustrations of the subject, which have since occurred to him, or have been suggested by the kindness of friends, he has now incorporated in the preceding pages. The necessity of compression induced him likewise wholly to omit everything which he had learned from his long knowledge of Mr. WATSON, or from the communications of others, in the way of *biographical details* of his general history. But in compliance with the wish of several friends, he now takes the liberty of appending to his enlarged discourse a brief *Outline* of that kind. It includes not only some information respecting Mr. WATSON's early life, which had been previously furnished by the obliging attention of the Rev. THOMAS GALLAND, A.M., and other materials then necessarily suppressed, but various particulars subsequently collected by his own careful inquiries into facts, or kindly placed at his disposal by the Rev. JOHN HANNAH, by Mrs. WATSON, and by several other persons, who well knew Mr. WATSON, at different periods of his earthly career. These are embodied in the First Article of this Appendix, under the head of *Brief Biographical Notices.* They may, probably, after all, be deemed *chronological* rather than properly *biographical;* being stated as succinctly and rapidly as was practicable,

because weighty reasons prohibited that further amplification, and those more extended observations on the facts recorded, which, under other circumstances, it would have been easy to present. Such as they are, they may not be found uninteresting to some classes, at least, of readers, into whose hands this publication may come; and they may even cast additional light on points already noticed in the preceding Sketch of Mr. WATSON's Character.

Conscious of the limited nature of his own plan, and of manifold defects in its execution, the Author was anxious to obtain the aid of some respected friends, whom he believed well qualified to estimate the intellectual, ministerial, and moral excellencies of the deceased. For that aid he offers his best thanks. He has occasionally availed himself of it, in what has already been brought before his readers; but he believes that he shall much enhance the interest and the value of this publication, by adding at length the two Letters, which are numbered as the Second and Third Articles of this Appendix. The former was addressed to him by his esteemed friend, the Rev. JOHN SCOTT, of Manchester, to whom Mr. WATSON was long and intimately known; the latter by Mrs. BULMER, of London, who also long enjoyed the private friendship and public ministrations of Mr. WATSON, and than whom no person is better qualified to appreciate his worth and talents. Her beautiful and spirited poem, lately published, and entitled "*Messiah's Kingdom*," was probably one of the last books, if not the very last, which our common friend, now passed into the skies, (whose lofty views of truth, and noble powers of illustrating and enforcing it, her letter so well depicts,) employed himself in perusing; and he stated in strong terms, to the writer of these lines, his high opinion of its theological and poetical merit.

The Author respectfully expresses, in conclusion, his humble and earnest hope, that, *as a whole*, the present publication may not be deemed, by the numerous admirers of his lamented friend, altogether unworthy of the title which he has presumed to give it; and that they will candidly accept it

as the best MEMORIAL he had it in his power to offer them of one whom, however, they who knew him well can never cease to remember, and whom it is impossible for such to recollect at all, with other sentiments than those of solemn, tender, and affectionate regard.

No. I.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF MR. WATSON.

RICHARD WATSON was born at Barton-upon-Humber, in Lincolnshire, February 22, 1781. There his father followed the occupation of a saddler; but, becoming obnoxious to many of the inhabitants, on account of his religious profession, and being consequently discountenanced by them in his business, he removed his family to Lincoln, about the year 1789.

At Lincoln, the subject of these notices was first sent to an English and Commercial School, taught by Mr. HESCOTT; and afterwards to the public Grammar School of that city, then, it is believed, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. OUTHWAITE, assisted by the Rev. JOHN CARTER, where he acquired the elements of classical learning, and that degree of mental discipline which results from the regular scholastic exercises of such institutions.

At the age of fourteen, he was placed as an apprentice with Mr. BESCOBY, joiner and builder, of Lincoln; and not long afterwards, was brought under the converting influence of divine grace, as before related at pages 32 and 33 of the preceding sheets. This event awakened new tastes and holier aspirations; and led, eventually, to an entire change of occupation. That change was kindly facilitated by his master, who soon released him from his apprenticeship, though he had already given promise of much proficiency and skill in the calling to which he had been originally destined by his

parents. The separation appears to have been perfectly amicable on each side. "His master's family," says Mr. HANNAM, "cherish an affectionate regard for his memory; and preserve, with assiduous care, an article of domestic furniture made by the hands of RICHARD WATSON."

Very soon after his conversion, young as he was, he was encouraged (whether very *prudently*, may be matter of reasonable doubt) to commence the work of publicly calling sinners to repentance. "His first sermon," Mr. GALLAND informs me, "was preached in a cottage, at the small village of Boothby-Graffoe, near Navenby, about seven miles from Lincoln, on what is called the Cliff Row." In his engagements, as a Local Preacher, among the then dark and spiritually-destitute villages of that part of Lincolnshire, he encountered a share of those violent persecutions, which, at that time, assailed the messengers of truth and salvation. It was the habit of those excellent men, in whose labours Mr. WATSON was associated, to stand up in the open air, and publish the words of life to as many as could be persuaded to listen. His zeal, in this work, was very great, and his addresses were distinguished by their earnestness and even by their vehemence. One village he visited, in which his uncle, a respectable farmer, resided; and there he was attacked with putrid eggs, and other similar missiles; while his relative, so far from protecting him, encouraged the mob in their proceedings, and said, "Pelt him well, lads;—my nephew can *stand fire*."

About the middle of the year 1796, the late Rev. THOMAS COOPER being indisposed, and the reputation of Mr. WATSON's popular talents having already become considerable, he was requested to spend a few weeks at Newark, where Mr. COOPER was then stationed, in order to render him occasional assistance, during his temporary disability. This service he performed very acceptably to the people; and was made very useful. To protect themselves from persecution, some of the Preachers of that Circuit found it necessary to obtain certificates, commonly called licenses, under the Toleration

Act then in force; and Mr. WATSON availed himself of the opportunity. This was on the 10th of August, 1786. Some objections were made to him by the magistrates, very naturally, on account of his youth, and boyish appearance; for, though very tall, he was exceedingly slender; but one of the Bench observed, that "no age was specified for the Dissenters," and the usual oaths were reluctantly, and somewhat angrily, administered to the juvenile applicant. He then returned to his parents, at Lincoln. But not long after the Conference of 1796, he was again called to assist Mr. COOPER who had removed to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and was there employed during the remainder of the methodistical year, which period was considered, at the following Conference, as constituting the first year of his probation as a regular Travelling Preacher in our Connexion.

In 1797, he was stationed in the Castle-Donington Circuit; in 1798, he was appointed for Leicester; and in 1799, he was sent to Derby. At the London Conference, in 1800, he was publicly recognised, after the usual probation of four years, and the customary examinations, as a preacher in full ministerial connexion with our body, by the truly venerable and REV. JAMES WOOD, then our President, for whom he retained, to the close of his life, a peculiarly affectionate and respectful esteem.

In 1800, he was appointed to the Hinckley Circuit. This was emphatically that "hour of temptation," to which reference has more than once been made in the preceding pages. I learn, on the best authority, that in speaking of it, long afterwards, he himself frankly designated it as "the day of his folly;" and the most enthusiastic friendship is under no necessity of *contradicting* his own sober judgment of the matter. Nothing but the baseness of faction, which will stoop to the most contemptible meanness, or else an utter want of kind and generous feeling, will prompt any unfriendly use of this manly avowal of youthful haste and impetuosity. Justice, however, demands the repeated statement, that, whatever were his *perils*, or his actual *indiscretions*, there is

no proof of any such systematic and decided tendency to doctrinal aberration, on vital points, as might not, by the patient and judicious management which such a youth deserved, have been speedily removed. Probably there was much of misunderstanding, and of misapprehension of his peculiar mental character, on one side; and not less of excessive loftiness of spirit on the other. The lamentable result was, that, without the slightest imputation on his moral character, in the usual sense of that expression, he abruptly, but voluntarily, retired from our itinerant work,—probably about the end of the year 1800,—entered into secular business, was married not long afterward to the excellent and amiable person who is now his mourning widow, and for a time settled at Castle-Donington. Strong convictions of his divine call to ministerial service, strengthened by the calm and serious reflections which were induced by a severe affliction, as described in pages 33 and 34, soon made him desirous of a sphere of action more congenial to his talents, and his desires of public usefulness. He found on inquiry that there might be obstacles to his re-admission as a minister among his former associates, arising partly from financial rules and usages, applicable to his now altered circumstances as a married man, and partly from the ill-judged discouragement of an official person then connected with the District in which the inquiry happened to be made. Too hastily concluding that this merely individual opinion indicated that an application in higher quarters must prove equally unsuccessful, and that the door into our ministry was absolutely closed, but still feeling conscientiously that "a dispensation of the Gospel was committed to him," he accepted an invitation to preach in the Chapel of the Methodist New Connexion at Nottingham; and afterwards embraced the overture made to him by the leading members of that body, to engage in more extensive labours among them. It was in the summer or autumn of 1803, I believe, that he repaired to their Manchester Circuit, as a temporary *supply*; residing, after the arrival of his family, in the Stockport section of it. It

was on no ground of conscientious difference from the Parent Connexion, at that time, either as to doctrine or discipline, that he took this step; for he has been heard to declare, that up to that period, his youth, and absorption in other theological studies, had prevented him from forming any well-examined or deliberate *principles* on the minor questions of church-polity which distinguished the Secession of that day,—though, sincerely attached at all times to "the great prominences of Methodism," common to all its forms of administration. To these points, however, his attention was now, in some degree, necessarily directed. "He was asked," as I am informed by one of the parties concerned in the transaction, on behalf of the New Connexion, *if he would come into that Connexion?* and, after explaining its rules to him, he said *he would.*" At their next Conference, held in Whitsun-week, 1804, he was accordingly regularly entered as "on trial," and as having "travelled one year," and was appointed for Manchester. In 1805 they stationed him again at Manchester,—in 1806, 1807, and 1808, at Liverpool, he having been duly recognised, in 1807, at Leeds, as "received into full connexion." In 1809, his health having failed for a considerable time previously, he stands in their Minutes as a Supernumerary Preacher for Liverpool. In 1810 and 1811 he was again appointed for Manchester. In their Minutes of 1812 no station is assigned to him; but his name appears in the answer to the question, "Who has *desisted* from travelling?—a question which, according to the commendable usage of that body, is so worded, in order more explicitly to distinguish those of their Preachers who *voluntarily* retire, from such as are included in the subsequent list of Preachers who are significantly entered as "*discontinued.*" Thus it appears, that Mr. WATSON'S union with the New Connexion lasted from eight to nine years, during which he ever afterwards represented himself, when alluding to the subject at all, as treated with great *personal* respect and kindness; and those feelings continued to be, on his part, sincerely and cordially reciprocal.

The motives of Mr. WATSON'S secession were probably

complicated. One of the most operative was the partial failure of his health, and the apprehension of still further failure, at no very remote period. Another was undoubtedly the gradual and honest alteration of those views of church-government, which, in the *very earliest* period of his intercourse with the New Connexion, he had been, naturally enough, led by circumstances to admit, and in two instances at least, (one of which, however, occurred in 1804, and the other in 1805, when he was a very young man) publicly to avow by the press. These views were materially changed, when he afterwards found time more carefully to *study* such subjects; and when he had longer opportunities of observing what he thought to be the *practical working* of the new system, especially in reference to the proper ministerial independence of the Preachers, and their facilities for fully and impartially executing their disciplinary functions, without respect of persons, or slavish fear of consequences. He also found in the system of the Old Connexion, as it was arranged in 1797, and subsequently still further improved by various additional regulations, that which essentially corrected his former mistakes respecting it. Another motive was, his growing conviction, in which he was rather confirmed than opposed by the candid opinions of some of his most judicious and liberal-minded friends in the New Connexion itself, that *in his case, at least*, a more suitable and extensive field of general usefulness, if he should have health to prolong at all his public ministrations, might be found in the Old Connexion, where he already had many warm and attached friends. Influenced by such considerations, and not by any of those selfish or mercenary views which certain anonymous libellers have ascribed to him,—(views, as his whole character and conduct attest, most alien from his temper and habits, and to which, in fact, his actual circumstances presented no sort of temptation,)—he, on resigning his pastoral office among his late associates, retired to Liverpool; awaiting, no doubt, the openings of Providence, and especially the indications of duty which might be afforded

by his declining or improving health. He now felt himself at liberty, without any real violation of principle, to renew his formal connexion with that religious community, which had possessed his first attachments and his earliest services. He joined, as a private member, the class of Mr. JOHN JONES; and when the next quarterly visitation arrived, he said to Mrs. WATSON, with exemplary humility, and with a characteristic adherence to the order of God's church among us, "We must go and take our tickets from the Preacher: we must enter at the right door: discipline must be maintained." Accordingly, the Rev. JOHN GAULTER had the honour and pleasure of re-admitting into our society one who soon proved himself worthy of its highest stations. He was next regularly received as a Local Preacher; and, his health becoming more vigorous and comparatively established, he was affectionately urged by Mr. ENTWISLE, and the other Preachers then in the Liverpool Circuit, to take a place once more in our itinerant ministry. He complied, was most honourably accepted by our Conference, assembled at Leeds in 1812; and thus happily found, as every one has long since been fully convinced, his proper place of rest, and post of public duty. From that time he has been "all our own;" and has far more than repaired his youthful error by services of the highest order. In that year, and in 1813, he was stationed at Wakefield; a circumstance most happily *providential*, and which proved very influential on his own future line of studies and labours, as it led to his prominent connexion with that glorious revival and extension of Missionary zeal and effort, which commenced among our societies in that part of Yorkshire, in the autumn of the year 1813, and has since leavened with its holy influence our whole body. He was one of the first who embraced the invitation to enter on the new mode of evangelical enterprise then adopted; his great talents and influence were pre-eminently useful in this work, during its season of initial difficulty and partial discouragement; and in this blessed career he ever afterwards proceeded, without wavering and without interruption.

In 1814 and 1815, he was appointed to the Hull Circuit; a station which at that time peculiarly needed a man of his grade, and in which his ministrations were greatly owned of God. In 1816 and 1817, he was stationed in what are now the First, Third, and Fourth London Circuits, then all united, and called London East;—in 1818, 1819, and 1820, in the Circuit then denominated London West, which included the principal places now comprised in the Second, Fifth, and Sixth London Circuits. In 1821, he was appointed one of the Resident Secretaries of our Missionary Society, which office he held during the period of six years allowed by our Rule; and he was, in 1826, elected to the Presidential Chair of our Conference. In 1827 and 1828 his labours were devoted to the Third Manchester Circuit. In 1829, on special grounds of public utility and exigency, he was re-appointed to the First London Circuit, where he remained, eminently honoured by God and by his people, till the Conference of 1832, at which he was again requested to consecrate his high endowments to the immediate service of the Wesleyan Missions, in the capacity of Senior Secretary. He delivered a most affectionate and edifying farewell address to the society, at City-Road, on the occasion of his final removal from the official duties of that Circuit; in the course of which he stated, that the last three years of his ministry among them had been the happiest period of his public life. The account given me of this address, by an "old disciple," may not be uninteresting to the reader:—"On the last Sabbath-evening of his attendance at the City-Road Chapel, he did not preach, but met the Society, which was attended with a special blessing to all present. It was a very solemn season. He lamented, that, owing to his frequent indisposition, during the last year, he had not been able to fill his important station, as the Superintendent of the Circuit, as he wished; but his apostolical address to us was truly affecting. He appeared like an affectionate father taking leave of his family. Little did many of us think, that he was then occupying for the *last* time that pulpit, in

which he had so often ministered to thousands the word of eternal life."

Soon after this, he entered on his labours, as Secretary for the Missions, (if I may use the expression which his lamented colleague, Mr. JAMES, employed in a letter addressed to me at the time,) "*in fine style*;"—full of zeal, and love, and anxious solicitude to promote with his utmost powers the great cause to which he was once more officially and exclusively devoted,—with a deepened piety and mellowed character,—with graces evidently matured by sanctified affliction,—and, in a word, in "the palmy state of man," both as to intellectual and spiritual endowments. There was but one alloy,—the fear of his friends that his health and life were in no ordinary degree precarious. That fear all must have felt, who saw him at the late Conference in Liverpool. His admirable sermons, and solemn public intercessions, at that season, can never cease to be remembered, by those who heard them, with reverential and tender interest. Of the danger he himself was sensible; as his prayers, his conversations, and his latest letters to his friends, sufficiently evinced. And how true were our worst anticipations the event has sadly proved. But,

> "That all his full-blown glories thus should fade,
> Was God's most righteous will;—and be that will obey'd!"

He died, as before stated, on the 8th of January, 1833, aged fifty-one years, ten months, and seventeen days; and was interred in the Burial-Ground adjoining to the City-Road Chapel, on the 15th of the same month, in the presence of a large congregation of sincere mourners. The Rev. JOSEPH ENTWISLE, the Rev. GEORGE MARSDEN, and the Rev. EDWARD OAKES, were the Ministers who engaged in the Funeral-Service.

No. II.

LETTER FROM THE REV. JOHN SCOTT, OF MANCHESTER, DATED *January* 15, 1833.

I feel capable of little else but thinking of that dispensation of Providence which has bereaved our Connexion of our valued friend Mr. Watson, and of the distinguished excellencies which concurred to place him on such an eminence among us. And though I cannot hope to furnish any particulars with which you are unacquainted, or suggest any thoughts which have not occurred to you before, especially surrounded, as you now are, by so many of his intelligent and admiring, though sorrowing friends; yet I will indulge the melancholy pleasure which a compliance with the wish you were pleased to express will afford.

We conversed on the eminently noble powers of mind with which a gracious God, bounteous of his gifts, had endowed him; and on the just relation, in point of strength, which one bore to another. This gave him a great advantage. It is perhaps singular, that a person of such a vivid fancy should be so little disposed to speculate. Had he liked to build theories, he would have produced them as imposing for symmetry and beauty as any which were ever formed by the most accomplished architect of such things. But here his judgment interposed, and all was severely submitted to the plain rules of truth. Whilst what he preached and wrote was often conceived and expressed in as beautiful imagery and language as the best poetry ever employs; we had all the gravity in the subject, and caution in the manner of treating it, which could have resulted had judgment been his only intellectual excellence. Allowing a more free use of the imagination in treating religious subjects than Mr. Wesley, we had in Mr. Watson a similar strictness and care to guard all he said from error. I remarked, years ago, how diligently he examined every thought, and how anxious he was not to be misled by the first impression which it made; and, when the subject was religious, how readily he submitted it to the authority of God's word. This exempted him happily from temptation to pervert the meaning of Scripture. Often have I observed his manner of examining a passage, when he would criticise the terms, and investigate the

sense, with great freedom and patience; but it was clear he had no preconception with which the text *must* be made to accord;—he submitted to the leading of the truth, and cheerfully followed his guide.

In the exercise of his remarkable powers he never seemed to weary. His appetite for knowledge was never satisfied. He read nature in all its forms and accidents; and once he told me that, were he to follow his original taste, natural philosophy would be his favourite study. Natural scenery, in all its forms of beauty and of grandeur, gave him pleasure. I have reason to believe that in early life he repaired to this as a means of refining his taste, and supplying him with images for the *adorning* of the truth. His mind ranged through the present and the past; he read the historians, the poets, the philosophers; and thus acquired very large stores of information, as you well know. But for nothing else, at least since I knew him, did he ever neglect the study of divinity. When he was engaged in any other studies, which much interested his mind, I know that he contrived to keep up the regular and systematic study of theology. In his *mode of using knowledge*, few were like him. The assimilating power of his mind always seemed to me to be its distinguished excellence, and gave him his great superiority. Knowledge never remained undigested, or piled up in heterogeneous masses: it was disposed of with an accuracy and readiness which showed the master-mind. Whether he had experienced any difficulty in forming the habit, or whether it was an intuitive excellence, is perhaps not easily decided; but it was observable that no fact or opinion which came fresh to his knowledge, long remained in his mind in the form in which it entered: with remarkable rapidity he referred it to something else from which it resulted, or which it proved or illustrated. This I have often remarked when I have read to him, or related to him something which I had heard, or read, or thought;—perhaps before I had half gone through, some remark showed that it had been carried into connexion with some general principle. This I think was the secret of many of his peculiar excellencies as a preacher and writer. When we have stood around him, looking at the same object, while he was raised above us all, standing on some height, projecting his views far and wide, and then informing us of what he saw, it was not so much the knowledge to be

derived from books, that gave him this advantage; but he referred things known to their principles, and principles to their consequences, better than most other men. This rendered him so free from peculiarity of opinion. He took up sentiments which many knew, perhaps familiarly; but he carried them out into connexions and results, of which perhaps none had thought: and such were his clearness and the justness of his inductions, that one *felt* he was correct. This I think would account for his originality as a preacher and writer. I have sometimes tried *this* experiment: I have mentioned to him something I had met with, retaining in my own mind the train of thought with which I found it connected, or which had occurred to myself; when instantly he has taken and placed it in connexion with some other class of ideas with which it associated more happily. It was a truly pleasing thing to see him take up one's own thoughts, and throw them into new combinations, and place them in new lights, by the exercise of this wondrous power. How often, too, has one marked those nice, but just, discriminations with which his ordinary ministry abounded: he evidently never sought to divide hairs; but when he found things widely different, and even opposite, joined in dark and misleading confusion, he could separate them with justness, and show how different were their meaning and their bearings.

As a preacher, it has often struck me that GRATTAN'S eulogy on KIRWAN applied much better to MR. WATSON,—"When he preached, the pulpit became a throne of light." What loftiness, what range, what magnificence in the general conception; what transparency of thought in all that he brought forward to fill up the grand outline; what frequent touches of the beautiful and sublime in the images he used; and what maxims of wisdom, folded up in expressions of peculiar beauty, going directly to the heart!—stars sparkling in the depth of the cloudless ether! How truly distressing the thought that, on earth, we shall hear his voice no more!

As a man, he was remarkably free from eccentricity,—for so great an one. None would question his independence, his "lofty bearing," as he, in another man, would probably have called it. His noble generosity and disinterestedness we have all observed:—I have seen it in scores of little, as well as in many great instances, and of this he has given our Connexion proof in the disposal of his

works. And how free he was from vanity and egotism, as we remarked when I saw you! I am inclined to think that his constant contemplation of the useful and the fair, his habitual residence, if I may so speak, among forms of the highest beauty, creations of his own mind, and amidst scenes of uncreated beauty, opened to his view by divine revelation, freed him entirely from this failing. He had, I think, a vivid perception of the "*beauty* of holiness," and whilst this kept him humble before God, it enabled him to array religion in most fascinating loveliness. I have heard young people say, it was impossible to hear him preach, and not be in love with religion. Speaking of vanity, one day, he quoted a passage from the Abbé MAURY to this effect: (I have not the book:) "When I think that I stand in the presence of the great and awful God, I am saved from the inquietude of vanity:"—on which Mr. Watson remarked, "What an unquiet feeling is vanity, and how sure a remedy is a strong sense of God." His prayers gave evidence that his *own* sense of God was habitually strong. What humility, what tenderness, when he made, as a sinner, and leading a company of sinful men, his approach to God; and how quickly we found ourselves under holy influence when he prayed! Whatever he found his fellow-worshippers, and in whatever frame, they soon felt their minds, with all their stray thoughts, seized and carried onward and upwards, sensibly softened and humbled, in the way to the mercy-seat, the need of which was deeply felt, and thence to the heavenly Majesty, there to remain in adoring wonder, love, and praise. I have heard it said here, repeatedly, that if he had dismissed the congregation on a Sabbath-evening after his first prayer, which lasted usually twenty or twenty-five minutes, they would have been amply rewarded for having assembled.

I could write on in this way long enough, but I fear, that though it gratifies me, it will do no service to your purpose. Such as this letter is, however, I send it. May the blessing of God be eminently upon you, in fulfilling the last office of friendship to our departed friend! May the divine unction be poured richly on your heart!

No. III.

LETTER FROM MRS. BULMER, OF LONDON, DATED *January* 16, 1833.

I believe I shall find an echo in your breast when I express my conviction that, in the late awful and affecting bereavement with which it has pleased a gracious, though inscrutable Providence to afflict our Connexion, one of the brightest lights has been extinguished that ever irradiated our sanctuary with its hallowed, cheering, and heaven-enkindled beams.

To have been privileged to listen to the message of mercy from the lips of our late revered, beloved, and lamented friend and minister, the Rev. RICHARD WATSON, I shall always account among the chief blessings, for which I owe an unbounded debt of gratitude, to the great author of all good. I must be allowed to say, that he touched a chord in my spirit that awakened its deepest sympathy with whatever is profound and noble in the mysteries of our holy religion. With the contrite humiliation which becomes a sinful being in the presence of an infinitely just and righteous God, he was so instructed to unfold the mild yet awful glories of redemption, as to raise up the fainting spirit, and to inspire the confidence of faith, and the elevations of hope and love. Upon the great subjects connected with the Divine Character as displayed in the scheme of man's salvation, his own thoughts and views were sublime and comprehensive. Those thoughts and views he laboured to convey to others; and while under the influence of his impressive eloquence, sanctioned and rendered efficacious by the co-operating energy of the Holy Spirit, the serious mind partook of his expansions, and ascending on the wings of pure devotion, left the world, and all its unsubstantial vanities, to taste the holy pleasures of religion,—resolved to consecrate the spirit, with its whole intensity of feelings, thoughts, and principles, to God its proper centre, and to make the interests of eternity its grand and chief concern.

Nor were these results produced by artificial or inferior means. No style of ornamental rhetoric, no declamatory or inflated diction, were employed to move the passions, or to captivate the sense.

His instrument was Scriptural Truth. The mode of its employment was a calm, clear, hallowed, earnest enunciation of that truth to those who heard him. It was delivered, indeed, through the medium of a mind capable of descending much, very much, below the common surface of thought, and of scaling heights that as far exceeded the general level of allotted intellectual power. But the great verities of the Gospel were always transparently exhibited, neither beclouded by mysticism, nor evaporated in unimpressive generalities. The path of life was made plain to the simplest inquirer; and none could retire from his lucid and faithful ministry without having had the opportunity of learning those doctrines, by which man is made wise unto salvation, and prepared for the fruition of eternal joy.

His Theology was impressed with a richly evangelical character. Man, in his fallen state, he viewed as a creature wholly alienated from God; and dark was the picture he was wont to exhibit of a spirit separated from the fountain of happiness, and found in a state of enmity to Him in whose favour alone is life. But Redemption was his favourite theme. He stood beneath the cross in adoring contemplation, and rejoiced to point sinners to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. His views of the largeness of redeeming mercy were bounded only by the extent of human misery. In the name of his great Master, he proffered a free and a full salvation to the whole fallen world; and often,—oh! how often,—have our hearts burned within us, while he expatiated on the immense benefits accruing (to believers especially) from the great sacrificial offering, which, through the Eternal Spirit, was presented without spot to God! Remission of all sin, through faith in the efficacy of that infinite atonement,—the inward witness of pardon and acceptance by the Spirit of adoption,—regeneration, from its first principle to its maturity, in the attainment, through the energy of the same Spirit, of the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,—these were the themes on which he ordinarily exercised his hallowed function, and on which he brought to bear all the high faculties of his richly endowed mind. He brought to them thoughts and feelings which made them (under the divine influence) live with new vividness in the consciences, the hearts, the understandings of his hearers. On these subjects, from a sense of their

primary importance, in the later years of his ministry more especially, he most emphatically dwelt. But he occasionally enlarged the circles of his flight. Never, however, vagrantly or presumptuously surpassing the boundaries of his proper sphere, but maintaining always, through the attraction of divine love, indissoluble union with his great centre, he returned from his most excursive sallies to that only point of bliss, and there re-plumed his pinions for renewed and loftier flight.

On the mysteries of Divine Providence, he exercised an expansive range of thought. The kingdoms of this world, with all their fleeting grandeur, passed before his eye of faith, as performing their successive revolutions under the controlling guidance of one almighty hand. He traced all sublunary empire to its connexion with the Church of Christ; and beheld the living wheels, subordinating all things to the final purpose of omniscient wisdom and eternal love.

On the Consummation of the Mediatorial Scheme, he would expatiate occasionally, with that elevated anticipation which transported those who heard him into distant scenes and unknown regions, where the spirit's largest faculties sunk under the overwhelming impression of an incomprehensible eternity, and a present God. The solemn transition of the soul, through death, into the realities of the invisible world called forth all his intensity of thought, feeling, and expression;—yet, not to sketch a death-bed scene, nor to portray the agonizing emotions of acute sensibility suffering the pang of bereavement from all it most valued and loved, nor even to attempt to define the strange and awful anticipations of the soul about to take its flight from the scenes and connexions of earth:—his grand aim, on these momentous occasions, was to bring the hearts and consciences of his hearers into immediate contact with that solemn period, when the "unclothed spirit," placed beneath the beams of Omniscience, shall feel its need of that justifying and sanctifying righteousness, in which it can only be found by having put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the hallowed joys of Paradise, when "mortality shall be swallowed up of life," he would also delightfully enlarge. Feeling the present blessedness of divine communion, and heightening and expanding his ideas to the sublime conceptions of eternity, and of

disengagement from terrestrial obscuration, he would, by the hand of faith, lift up the veil of mortality, and endeavour to show his hearers that the prize of eternal life is worth the winning; and that a participation in the Saviour's glory will more than compensate for all the sacrifices they may be called to make of a sinful, vain, precarious, and transitory world.

On the stupendous triumphs of the Resurrection-Scene, when the Redeemer, at the latter day, "shall stand over the dust," and call forth the sons of God to receive their ratified adoption in the presence of an assembled universe, he dwelt with an energy that made every interest, unconnected with the great tribunal of eternal judgment, appear of less importance than the passing mote.—On the Deliverance of Creation from the bondage of corruption and vanity, he exulted with the hallowed joy of a believer, who anticipates the perfect accomplishment of every promise of Holy Writ.—And, as a worker together with God in the promotion of the interests of his kingdom, it is almost superfluous to say, how sedulously he applied the varied powers of his comprehensive and penetrating mind to every department of the great Missionary Work; and with what energy, and talent, and zeal, he strove unceasingly to enforce upon others the duty of following him, in this respect, as he followed Christ.

I feel, as I proceed, my utter inability to sketch even the lineaments of that mind, beneath whose power my own spirit has so often sunk subdued. I wish I could transfer to my paper the deep, and, I trust, never-to-be-effaced impressions, received under his ministry, when, with all the sanctity of hallowed feeling, and all the power of intense thought, he has opened up the great subjects already glanced at, with all their connecting links of holiness and truth. But my pinion droops far, very far, beneath a flight so lofty as that to which the eagle, not in vain, aspired; yet my eye follows him in his ascending; and I rejoice that I have been privileged to track the progress of so bright a spirit in his upward journey to the world of light.

Yet, on the Mental Portraiture of our revered friend and minister, (as a part of the task your friendship has assigned me,) if I may presume to dwell for a moment, I should say, that his mind was possessed of those characteristics which

class it with intellect of the highest order. It was strictly and purely philosophical; adapted to the profoundest investigation of truth, as well as to its most lucid illustration. Without parade of speculative metaphysics, he performed the highest functions of intelligence with the most unconstrained facility. Generalizing, analyzing, abstracting, and combining the various principles and objects of scientific thought, and of impulsive feeling and affection, he would adjust the several parts of truth, and exhibit its complete structure in all its admirable proportions of symmetry and grace.

To this admirable perfection of understanding and judgment, was added a vivid and chaste imagination. He could not only elevate the fair model of truth, as displayed in coldness and purity by the chiselled marble; but he could also clothe it with the most beautiful and appropriate drapery. Endowed with an exquisite perception of the harmonies and sublimities of the natural, as well as of the moral world, he employed the inexhaustible resources of nature, with the finest and purest taste, in the metaphorical illustration of spiritual and abstract truths.

Yet metaphor, under his management, was not the artificial appendage of spangles to a surface, for the sake of splendid and gorgeous effect: it was the natural and genuine irradiation of a mind equally perceptive of truth and of beauty; and formed an integral part of that rich, firm, and well-wrought fabric, which it served, not to encumber, but to illustrate and adorn.

His style was pure, perspicuous, and elevated; never turgid or declamatory. His action was calm, appropriate, and dignified; in keeping with the cast of his mind, the magnificence of his subjects, and the hallowed nature of his office, as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Honoured with the personal friendship of this great and good man, it has been my privilege to sit at his feet, and in the private and social circle, as well as in his public teaching, to receive the oracles of wisdom from his lips. Accessible, kind, and condescending, he was ever ready to impart those treasures with which his own mind was so munificently endowed. Cast in a mould of dignity, while conscious of his own intellectual eminence, he was yet frank, and cheerful, and open, in the kindly intercourse of friendship, and was gladly hailed as the star of the ascendant

whenever he appeared in the social circle. In private, as in public, his aim was to edify and exalt; to illustrate truths already apprehended, or to introduce some topic, familiar only to his own capacious mind. He was fond of conversation, and loved to elicit the sentiments of others, on subjects under his own consideration. Indeed, every changing circumstance formed to him a new object of excursive thought; and subjects long and deeply contemplated, seemed, as he advanced in life, to acquire tints of holier and more mellowed light.

His "sun is gone down, while it was yet day;" and the obscuration cast on the sphere in which he has been wont to move will not be soon or easily dispersed. In this, the region of his latest ministry, the scene of his efficient and endearing pastoral attentions to the flock committed to his charge, the painful sense of grief for the bereavement which not only we but the church at large has suffered, must be deeply and permanently felt. But consolation, abundant consolation, is not wanting under this afflictive stroke. That our departed friend was long maturing for the world of glory, has been evident, as well to those who listened to his public teaching, as to those who were honoured with his more immediate confidence, in the intimacy of private friendship. From many quarters, observations of this kind will reach you. Suffice it for me, then, to speak only of what I myself have witnessed; and to give, though very imperfectly, some record of Mr. Watson's latest conversations with one who, however unworthy, rejoices in having had the honour and the privilege of being acknowledged by him under the interesting character of a friend.

The solicitude I had long felt, under the painfully deepening impression that Mr. Watson's health was sensibly declining, was considerably increased from observing in his appearance a great change for the worse, in a friendly call which he made on me, one day in the latter end of November. Our interview was but a short one, yet it was marked with a hallowed character. I had myself been unwell; which afforded him an opportunity of noticing the benefits to be derived from affliction. "Pain," said he, "is a great blessing: it tends to detach our thoughts and affections from the world, and to concentrate them on things eternal.—I feel it to be so great a blessing, that I cannot pray for its removal. Pain, sorrow,

sickness, death,—its time, circumstances, and manner,—are all in the Covenant. How much is contained in those words: '*Nothing* shall by any means harm you.'" The emphasis of feeling and expression which he threw into these sentences greatly affected me. Although not unused to the holy tenour of his conversation in these occasional visits, yet there was a peculiarity in his manner *then*, that spoke the solemn lesson to my heart; and something seemed to whisper to me, that such special opportunities of instruction would not be very long continued.

The last time at which I was privileged with a visit from him, was the evening of November 25th, when the inducement of enjoying your society procured for me the gratification of another hallowed and delightful interview. I cannot now exactly remember how the subject was introduced; but, before your return from preaching, he pensively said, "Life, when a little protracted, leaves us comparatively *alone in the world*. Our friends depart successively, and we feel solitary and pensive." He had touched a string with which my mind was in unison; and it could not but respond to his plaintive tones. He took up then a higher key, and said, "We must not dwell exclusively on the darker scene;—but, in the exercise of faith, endeavour to realize the felicity of our departed friends, and to be in spirit associated with them, in that world of light and glory where they now dwell. Perhaps we do not derive the consolation which it is our privilege to do, from Christian *hope*." His solemn prayer, in the family devotion of that memorable evening, deeply impressed my heart; especially when, supplicating the divine blessing on your approaching journey, he prayed, that should we never again, on earth, be associated thus in holy worship, we might all meet in our Father's house above.

My next interview with him was nearly a month after this time;—I believe on the 18th of December. He was then increasingly ill, and looked much emaciated; but he was cheerful, as usual, and the frame of his mind deeply spiritual and heavenly. He spoke with great calmness of the probable issue of his affliction; and added, "I have not now to learn, for the first time, that *all is right and best*, and, as it should be, under the divine disposal,—whether restoration to health shall be vouchsafed to me, for further usefulness, or whether the continuance of severe pain shall shortly

terminate my sufferings by death." He then discoursed delightfully on the subject of a special Providence, and on the many opportunities he had enjoyed of testing the truth of that doctrine in his personal experience. "God," said he, "in the wise economy of his government has provided for the answer of prayer." He instanced such answers given to himself, especially as connected with his ministerial labours, when strength and refreshment had been remarkably vouchsafed to him in the hour of need,—appealing, at the same time, to Mrs. Watson for the confirmation of his statements on this interesting point.

My last solemn interview with Mr. Watson was on Thursday, December 27th. I was then admitted to see him for a short time, after he had endured that paroxysm of awful suffering which had brought him to the verge of the grave. Never shall I forget the expression of his countenance, when I first met the glance of his languid and almost tearful eye. It was a look of ineffable kindness and affection; and seemed as if it could be second only to that with which I trust we shall again regard each other in a sinless and unsuffering world. It dissolved my soul in grief. I felt assured that his stay among us could not be long, and the idea of his removal inflicted a poignant pang. His frame bore the impress of the agony he had endured. But his spirit seemed pavilioned in the very Divine Presence. He said "he felt the sustaining power of God," and discoursed, for a short time, and with frequent intermissions through great debility, on that most delightful topic, peculiarly suggested by the season, "They shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us." "Yes," said he, "God with *us*,—with *us all*,—with *each* of us,—*with us at all times*,—*under all circumstances*,—*especially with us, in deep sympathy with all our sorrows, dangers, and sufferings.*" He was evidently giving utterance to sentiments, the truth of which he was then powerfully realizing in his own experience. Faith triumphed over dissolving nature, and the Rock of Ages he felt to be the strength of his failing heart:—our parting is indelibly written on mine. With a voice faltering through irrepressible emotion, he expressed a hope that our next meeting might be under more favourable circumstances, and added, "If not,—if not,—may we have a happier meeting in heaven!"

That heaven is now enriched by the accession of his sainted and emancipated spirit to the holy and victorious company that already wave their palms of triumph before the everlasting throne.—A new motive is presented to the friends of those who have surmounted the swellings of Jordan, to follow them through all remaining tribulations, until they also overcome, and are eternally associated with those whom they have loved and lost below.

May the parting prayer of the deceased be eminently fulfilled in all who mourn his loss:—Amen and Amen!

FINIS.

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DUE MAY 20 '42

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